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THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS AND NOVELS

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THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS AND NOVELS

OF

R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

A NEW ÉDITION.

VOL. VI.

CONTAINING

THE FIRST VOLUME OF MORLAND.

—
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1813.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

MORLAND:

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE SIMPLE.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar.

HOR.

My scenes, though feign'd, from real life I draw.

VOL. I.

MS. A. 9. 2.

1800

and the other of the same name

1800

1800

1800

ADVERTISEMENT.

By the word *simple*, in the title-page, I do not mean devoid of involution, which would render a story insipid as well as simple; but a display of common or probable facts, natural sentiments, and characters, so composed as to engage the attention and interest the mind: *ex noto fictum*. Neither do I mean by the word *surprising*, the marvellous, which conducts the mind beyond the limits of nature; but a series of facts so highly improbable as to seem impossible, till in the winding up of the story they are fully accounted for.

The chief object, however, of this as well as of my former novels, is to mend the heart in the entertainment of leisure hours. I hope it will be deemed worthy of a place by the others, though I am sensible it has many faults.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF CHARLES THE FIRST
BY JOHN BURNET
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
IN TWO VOLUMES
THE SECOND VOLUME
LONDON, Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1680.

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MORLAND.

THE FIRST TALE; ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SIMPLE.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar.

HOR.

My scenes, though feign'd, from real life I draw.

1844

THE
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NEW YORK
1844

INTRODUCTION.

SOON after the following tale was begun a friend called upon the Author, and being informed how he was employed, asked if he was determined to adhere to his plan of simple memoirs.

AUTHOR.

The value of these works of imagination consists in the faithful pictures they present of mankind. When an author transports his reader into the regions of improbability, his only view is to amuse idleness, and gratify wonder, the passion of children.

FRIEND.

Men are but children of a larger growth, and the view of every writer, I presume, is to be read.

AUTHOR.

Yes : but it should not be his principal one.

FRIEND.

Chapter first. Pray read me this chapter.

AUTHOR.

With all my heart.

FRIEND (*the chapter being read*).

It will not do to go on thus. Work in a little of the marvellous, or at least of the surprising, and depend upon it the book will sell the better.

AUTHOR.

In Morland all must be nature. He writes his own memoirs, you see, and I have no right to alter his facts; I have only to pay attention to the style, and correct the press.

FRIEND.

A thought strikes me: will you allow me to put it into execution?

AUTHOR.

What is it?

FRIEND.

To start with you from the first chapter: simple as it is, it may be turned into a fashionable romance—do you go on arranging your every-day facts and characters, and allow me to engraft a romance of surprising adventures on your stock of natural and simple life.

AUTHOR.

With all my heart. As soon as you have done we will compare our manuscripts. But by *surprising* do you mean to give loose to impossible or improbable flights?

FRIEND.

No: I do not mean to write a fairy-tale, or an Arabian night's entertainment. Perhaps, however, I shall attempt to astonish—but I must not betray myself. Let us say nothing to each other of our compositions till we are ready to read them.

This was agreed upon. THE MORLANDS were finished nearly about the same time, and the following is the first tale.

MORLAND.

CHAPTER I.

The education and prospects of Morland—Tears of early gratitude—A bitter pill gilt—Exterior mourning—The benevolent curate—Morland begins his journey—Of birth.

I RECEIVED the early part of my education at an excellent school in the town of Reading. Having experienced all the care and affection of a mother in the kindness of a lady whose name was Waller, it was not till I was a big boy, that I began to make any serious inquiry respecting my parents; and it was to little purpose when I did. I was silenced, and desired to consider my benefactress as my only parent.

Mrs. Waller was the widow of a brewer, who, at the time of his death, was beginning to accumulate a fortune; but, his debts amounting to a considerable sum, the clear remainder of his property afforded only a moderate income for his widow, with which, as she had no children, she managed to live comfortably, and to give me an education that entitled me to look upon myself as a gentleman. As my understanding strengthened, I became less curious on the subject of my birth; for, reflecting on

it, I took it into my head that Mrs. Waller, disappointed in not having children of her own, had yielded to a natural desire, and supplied the want by adopting a poor orphan. At the age of eighteen she sent me to the university of Oxford, with a decent allowance regularly paid every quarter; it was enough for my maintenance, and the prosecution of my studies, the sole objects of my ambition.

At Oxford I made the best use I could of my opportunity to satisfy the thirst for knowledge which had been excited during the last years of my stay at the school at Reading. What success I might ultimately have had in the study of divinity I cannot determine; for, though Mrs. Waller intended me for the church, Fortune, who it seems was not in her councils, had determined to dispose of me otherwise. My first attempts to dive into the mysteries of theology completely discouraged me; for I was not content to pin my faith on the sleeve of any man, of whatever reputation for learning and understanding, and I therefore read the works of freethinkers as well as those of orthodox divines. The consequence was that, after reading a few months, I found that I was alternately a Christian and a Deist, and that I was becoming an Atheist, by means of the volume I had entered upon. This awoke me to a sense of my incapacity: "No," cried I, "I will not be an Atheist—all nature proclaims a God; and, if it did not, I have that within me which does." I shut the book, resolved to postpone the study of divinity till my reasoning faculty had obtained a greater degree of maturity, till it was strong enough to detect fallacies as I proceeded, and till I had amassed a fund of real knowledge that would assist me in developing and fixing the abstruse points of so important, but at the same time so difficult, a science.

I took my leave of metaphysics, and opened the book of Nature. With what avidity did I seize the curious facts it presented to me, with what delight did I pursue the plain and easy reasoning that resulted from them. Newton and Buffon had no rest for me: they were perpetually on my table. I read, extracted, and abridged.

Charmed with nature, I began to be anxious to be more acquainted with that of man. I studied anatomy, I went through a treatise of logic, I read Locke, and found myself again involved in metaphysics. I sought for information of the actions of men, and the springs of those actions; I was referred to history. I read history, both ancient and modern, with pleasure, yet with disappointment: I did not find what I was in search of. I felt little affinity between the personages introduced and myself. Kings and princes, statesmen and heroes, founders of sects and royal mistresses, presented me an immense and agreeable drama, but I heard nothing of the ordinary race of mankind, except as communities; and to contemplate things in the aggregate, I knew, was not the way to become acquainted with them. To analyse was the method to obtain knowledge, but analysis was the operation of experience. This conclusion convinced me that I should but lose my time in endeavouring to study men in books; and, in the second year of my residence at Oxford, I resolved to return seriously to those studies which were to fit me for the profession to which I was destined. I was satisfied with thinking that I should, in time, mix with the world, and judge for myself; meanwhile I had an agreeable, if not a brilliant prospect, and the morning of my life dawned without clouds.

I had nearly completed my twentieth year, when one day, as I was weighing the arguments in favour

of a particular providence, the curate of Reading came suddenly into my room, and taking me by the hand, said to me, with tears in his eyes: "I have bad news for you, my dear Ned, which it would not be friendly to withhold from you a moment, I feel extremely for you—You are lost—Mrs. Waller is dead."—"Mrs. Waller dead!" cried I, agitated, and far from thinking of all the consequences of such an event. I recollected my obligations to the worthy woman, my feelings were severely shocked, my heart swelled, and I burst into tears.

"Give way to your tears, my friend," said the good curate, embracing me, "I love these proofs of an amiable nature: these tears cannot be suspected, and they are sweet in comparison with those you will have to shed for yourself."—"What more," said I, "have I to lament than the death of her who acted the part of a mother to me?"—"Yes, my dear boy," replied the curate, "she did indeed act the part of a mother to you, and no other will supply her place. You are at the mercy of the world; a hard-hearted world, from which charity is banished, where not even a trace of humanity is to be discerned. You must leave Oxford, my friend."—"What!" cried I, "Give up my studies?"—"Who is to enable you to prosecute them?" said the curate. "Has Mrs. Waller then," replied I, "left me entirely destitute?"—"Entirely," rejoined he, "for she died intestate, and her relations are needy persons, as little inclined, as compellable by the laws, to attend to the moral claims of an unknown orphan. By my absence from Reading at the time of Mrs. Waller's death, which happened a fortnight ago, you were spared the mortification of learning your fate from the voice of insensibility and vulgarity; for as I should have immediately written to you,

“ you would probably have attended, and received
“ the communication from her brothers. It was for-
“ tunate I did not, as on inquiry when I returned,
“ I found that the brutes who inherit the property
“ of your benefactress, had spoken of her with great
“ disrespect, for her goodness to you. The poor
“ lady being carried off by an apoplectic fit, seals
“ were immediately put to all her drawers, and her
“ friends informed of the event. She was interred
“ with bare decency, after the strictest search had
“ been made for a will, without success. I should
“ have doubted some foul play, had not my worthy
“ friend, Davis, her apothecary, who affixed the seals
“ to her drawers, attended at their removal, and
“ assisted in the search. He assured me that no
“ will was to be found, and that he was perfectly sa-
“ tisfied Mrs. Waller had not made one. Finding
“ you still ignorant of your misfortune, I resolved,
“ before I communicated it to you, to make an ef-
“ fort in your favour, by stating your situation to
“ her brothers, who are sugar-bakers in London,
“ to whom I wrote a civil letter, in which I called
“ upon them, in the name of justice and humanity,
“ to take into consideration the dreadful position
“ into which you were so unexpectedly thrown.
“ There is their answer.” I took the letter held out
by the curate, and read as follows :

“ Sir,

“ We have duly received your favour, bearing
“ date the 15th instant, and note the contents.
“ Can't say we are pleased with them at all, not
“ seeing what right a stranger have to meddle with
“ what do not concern him. What our sister, Mrs.
“ Waller, have left behind her is by no ways fit to
“ support any such charity, and we have plenty to
“ do to support the poor of our own parish. She

“ have injured both herself and us by her head-
“ strong manner of squandering her little property
“ on the person you speak of, who, as for the matter
“ of justice, ought to pay us back what our sister
“ robbed her own blood of to spend on him, and
“ so we beg to hear no more on this business, and
“ are,

“ Sir,

“ Your humble servants,

“ J. & W. BROWN.”

“ To the Rev. Mr. Scot, Reading.”

I clasped my hands, I cast my eyes to heaven,
“ Great God,” cried I, “ what shame am I involved
“ in! and the ashes too of my benefactress re-
“ proached on my account!”

“ Gently, my good friend,” said Mr. Scot, “ this
“ is a moment for the exercise of virtue—banish
“ from your mind the thought of a conduct that dis-
“ graces human nature, and resume your firmness.
“ I know not from what motive Mrs. Waller, who
“ never opened her mind to me on the subject,
“ thought proper to educate you for a situation, to
“ which it does not appear that you were entitled;
“ but certain it is that she has left this world with-
“ out taking any care to support you in that situa-
“ tion.—She has never told me, or any body else,
“ whether there was any relation between you and
“ her, or given the least idea of who you are. De-
“ prived of her assistance, you are now left totally
“ to yourself. Replete, as is your mind with the
“ seeds of virtue, the poverty and want which stare
“ you in the face are the only things you have to
“ fear. It is now necessary, my friend, to think how
“ you may avert their effects.”

“ What shall I do?” cried I, “ to whom shall I
“ apply? you are the only friend I have on earth,

“ for I have formed no connexion during my residence at Oxford. The familiarity of the great, which I might have shared, I knew would be inevitable destruction; and even with my equals I have associated but little, being impelled by gratitude to my benefactress to avoid every occasion of expence that might tempt me to exceed the allowance she made, which, though scanty, was as much as she could afford, and more than I had a right to expect: but the consequence is that I have made no friends here.”

“ And if you had, my dear Morland,” replied the curate, “ of what use could such friends be to you? My good friend, you would have found yourself neglected and deserted by them, and of course your misfortune would have been but the heavier. Besides, the collegians are young men under age, who have no power over their fortune; and if they were inclined to assist you, would not be allowed by their friends to make so noble a use of their ability. Your studies have been confined to books; you know nothing of mankind. England, in former ages, produced a race of men more unpolished in appearance than the present, but they were natural, open, and beneficent: now, under a more civilized exterior, men of all classes, the very poor excepted, plunged in luxury and debauchery, and in consequence, devoured by avarice, have renounced humanity—All, all are absorbed in the eager pursuit of the means to support their pomp and pleasures. To what purpose would you apply to beings of this stamp? Even were your talents, for a moment, to excite the good-will of one of them, you could only hope to secure a continuance of his patronage by relinquishing every opinion and sentiment of your own; by flattery, by base compliances, by a total

“dereliction of self-respect. Be above it, my friend, and place no dependence on the patronage of the great.”

“But what,” said I, with an anxious and sorrowful countenance, “what is to become of me?” —“I have already weighed in my mind,” replied the curate, “several plans for you. I have thought of your being introduced into some wealthy family as a tutor, but your youth is against it; for you are in fact little more than a boy yourself; you even look younger than you are, and you will find no one to trust you. The army would not be amiss; but then there is no obtaining a commission without money, or powerful interest; and those delicate limbs, formed in the shade of academic bowers, will never do for a common soldier. You may have the courage and honour of a Hotspur; but to be a soldier in the ranks, you should be five foot ten, strong, and patient: any other quality is useless, and perhaps dangerous. You are not young enough to begin the life of a sailor; the habits necessary for that profession must be acquired at a very early period; and, as it were, wrought into the constitution. As to a trade, though you were disposed to learn one, you must serve an apprenticeship; but where is the apprentice-fee to come from? My dear fellow, I tremble to mention to you the only means left you to procure, in the heart of the finest country, what the earth yields liberally in the most unfavoured parts of the world to those men living without laws, and without labour, called savages: you have no resource but service.”

“Heavens!” exclaimed I, “service! wear a li-very?”

The curate, dissatisfied with the world, and persuaded that I had no alternative, had made this cir-

cuitous harangue to soften my dreadful fall ; but I was by no means prepared for it. Though I was a stranger to pride, I possessed an elevation of soul that could not suddenly brook the thought of the abject condition, to which a compliance with Mr. Scot's suggestion would reduce me ; and the tears I shed at the bare idea were, indeed, as he had predicted, bitter in comparison with those which were the melancholy but soft effusions of gratitude. He attempted to console me. " Why distress yourself in this manner, my dear Ned ? " said he. " Though many things might be said in support of the state I have mentioned, I allow that to an educated mind it is humiliating ; but you have no choice, and recollect that virtue ennobles every state. Your soul will not become servile : you will do your duty, and by making yourself necessary to your employers, they will be attached to you. Far from leading the lazy life of persons in the station to which you are obliged to descend, you will privately cultivate and mature the fruits of your former studies ; and who knows but you may be as fortunate as some who are now making a figure in the world after having stood behind a chair ? Come, come, keep up your spirits ; it requires more courage to fall than to rise, particularly when the descent is rough ; but preserve the magnanimity and good sense which guide you down, and you will see that the humblest part may be sustained without debasement."

The necessity, the hope, the philosophy contained in the curate's argument could not diminish the repugnance I felt to the mortifying resource proposed ; and though, from want of experience, I could think of no other less mortifying, I continued to gaze in silence at him through the big tears that, having

ceased to flow, expanded over the surface of my eyes.

Perceiving that I made no reply, he proceeded thus: "Take the plan in another point of view, for "I see the reasoning I have used cannot reconcile "you to the humiliating garb of a domestic. You "find yourself on this planet called the Earth, in a "manner isolated, dropped from the clouds, without "relation or connexion; consider yourself then as "a being of another sphere, unacquainted with the "one into which you have fallen. You are not devoid of curiosity, and with the attainments your "faculties have acquired, no form, no walk of life is "so adapted to give you a complete knowledge of "this nether world. If any thing occur to change "your fortune, and to give you a taste for this "planet, it will be no disgrace to you to have descended, like the gods of antiquity, in disguise: "if, on the contrary, nothing happen to extricate "you from this lowly path that leads you to the "knowledge of mankind, you will have a reasonable "consolation, in observing the characters of men, "and in feeding well, while your soul and body keep "together, till you start for another world, where "you are sure all earthly distinctions are levelled; "taking care, however, never to persuade yourself "that you have a right to hasten your departure "from this."

As the curate unfolded this new conception, I felt my heart dilate: the idea pleased my fancy, and the project, which I could never have relished as the means of a livelihood, appeared pleasant as the choice of contemplative philosophy: neither reason nor self-love rose in my heart against it; and, eager only to take a minute survey of mankind, I yielded myself unreservedly to the direction of my friend, who, having fixed my determination, returned to Reading,

whither I promised to follow him as soon as I could settle my little matters at Oxford, and take leave of the few persons with whom I was acquainted. I had no intimacy which rendered it necessary for me to account particularly for the change that had taken place in the plan which had been marked out for me; I therefore merely stated, that the death of a friend, and peculiar circumstances, obliged me to quit the University, and relinquish altogether the pursuit of studies no longer requisite for my establishment in a profession. I sold every thing that was useless to me in my new condition, and adding the sum produced, to the remainder of my last receipt from Mrs. Waller, I found my purse, after paying all my debts, and purchasing mourning, which I resolved to wear for my benefactress, forty-three guineas and some shillings.

My portmanteau contained a tolerable wardrobe for a servant, a few philosophical volumes, and some melodies, which when I was fatigued with study, I had amused myself in composing; for, nature having gifted me with a remarkable good ear, I had first picked up a little practical music from the organist at Reading, and afterwards, without difficulty, made such a progress in the science at Oxford, that had it occurred to me as a means of support, I might have hoped great success. But though this natural talent had astonished some of the best judges, and though my voice was highly praised, I was never induced to break through the rules I had laid down for resisting the allurements of company, nor did it now strike me as a resource.

In a few days I joined my friend the curate, at Reading. He paid me some compliments on my looks, but at the same time thought my mourning a needless refinement of sentiment. I said I was convinced of Mrs. Waller's goodness, and that it was

entirely owing to the suddenness of her death that she had not provided for me ; it was therefore a tribute due to the memory of my benefactress. “ The sentiment, my dear fellow,” said he, “ does you no discredit ; for it is the result of your thinking like a generous young man entering into society, where you would testify your respect and value for a woman who had been a mother to you ; I only said that it was needless : and when you recollect that you have no other observer of your actions than myself, you may perhaps think so too. Black is as often chosen for decoration as for mourning. The real tribute of gratitude was paid in the unfeigned tears I saw you shed at Oxford : I observed it, and it was observed elsewhere ; but as for this inky suit, good Edward, it will only be observed as improving your complexion.” My sentiments on this subject did not accord with the curate’s ; I was pleased with the bare consciousness that my exterior corresponded with my disposition, and I thought it of little importance whether alone or in a crowd. I was not, however, inclined to debate the point, and I did not interrupt Mr. Scot, who proceeded to inform me of the steps he had taken in the promotion of my new plan.

“ I have a relation,” continued he, “ who has the small vicarage of Holcomb, in Devonshire, not far from Exeter. Though his living is not a rich one, he is much esteemed in that part of the country. The day I left you, I wrote him a letter concerning you, and mentioned the circumstances of your history which I thought would interest him. His answer is kind, and he says he hopes to obtain a situation for you. The sooner the better, and I advise you to set off immediately for Holcomb, as your finances, which can be but slender, will last longer in that cheap part of the kingdom

“ than in a neighbourhood so near the metropolis ;
“ and if the vicar succeeds in placing you soon, you
“ will save the more. Above all things begin early
“ to learn to save, as the surest means of arriving
“ ultimately at a state of independence.”

In this the curate did not, like most advisers, advise what he did not practise ; he supported a wife and three children on a scanty stipend ; but by the severest parsimony he managed always to be beforehand with trade in his observance of justice, and to have a little reserve, on very urgent occasions, for generosity. He viewed my case in this light, and concluded with putting five guineas into my hand, to be added to my little stock, whatever it might be. I was extremely struck with this proof of benevolence, which in my mind counteracted all the invectives lavished on the world by this very man. The whole of my little experience was in favour of mankind : I had been taken up a helpless infant, nourished and educated by the generosity of a woman, who was only prevented from making a provision for me by an unexpected death ; and when I was reduced to a state that threatened abject misery, a man, struggling himself with narrow circumstances, stepped forth to comfort, advise, and give me money. It is true I had met with an instance of selfishness in the sugar-bakers, Mrs. Waller's relations, but then I considered that I had actually been an intruder upon the family-property, and that it could not but have been a galling thing to see a strange infant preferred by their sister to their own children. The sugar-bakers knew nothing of me or I of them, and I did not impute to them what I found hard in my lot.

Impressed with esteem and gratitude, I thanked the curate as warmly as if he had made my fortune ; and with the tears of affection in my eyes refused his money, assuring him that I had no need of it. Of

this I convinced him by producing my purse, and displaying the contents of it before him. "My dear boy," said he, on seeing my guineas, "this is a little fortune, and you must save as much of it as you possibly can. If you are fortunate enough to be placed soon, I advise you to consult with the vicar of Holcomb, to put it out at interest, and by contriving to live entirely at the expence of your employers, by adding the interest, with your wages, to the principal, you will be astonished at the rapid accumulation of your fund." I assured Mr. Scot that I would profit by his advice. He then gave me a letter for his relation, whose name was Whitaker, and accompanied me to the inn to take my chance of a place in one of the Bath stages. Finding a vacant seat, we took an affectionate leave of each other: at parting, the curate took me by the hand, and, pressing it, said; "I have but one thing more to say to you—You are young, remember, my dear Ned, that time becomes a mirror to the mind; take care that its reflection may never burden your conscience; a guilty conscience is the worm that never dies."

My trunk being now put into the boot, with my eyes swimming in tears I threw myself into the coach, which continued its progress westward, and I was soon many miles from Reading. It was night, and my fellow passengers, influenced by darkness, or having exhausted their respective funds of talk, or perhaps having no reciprocal topics, travelled on in silence, which I, on my part, had no inclination to break.

My thoughts were absorbed by the late events of my life, by the singular position in which I stood in the world, and by endeavouring to support my resolution with the anticipation of agreeable effects from my plan of contemplative philosophy. In my reve-

ries the recollection of my total ignorance of my parents and relations would sometimes occur, accompanied with a natural gloom, which I dissipated by arguing that they who had been so unnatural as to desert me, could not be worthy either of affection or regret. At times, when I considered the elevated objects that charmed my mind, and the nature of my sentiments, I felt an inclination to believe myself descended from persons of no mean condition; but my understanding was too just to suffer vanity to betray me into the indulgence of such a notion. Time is ever producing combinations of soul with body, which on the one hand degrade rank and fortune, and on the other ennoble indigence and obscurity. The vigour of the mind is not the inheritance of rank, but the emanation of latent principles, and its expansion and taste are the results of education. I turned from the thought, and far from dwelling on birth, blessed God, that instead of giving way to the sensibility that would lead me to bewail my fate, and sink into despair, I had the courage to adopt the philosophy recommended by the curate of Reading.

CHAPTER II.

A May morning in a stage-coach—The best support in adversity—Reflections at Bath.

IN spite of the lulling motion of the carriage, and the example of my companions, my senses, excited by the activity of my imagination, remained uninfluenced by the power of sleep; and the beautiful dawn of a May morning drew my attention from myself to one of the sublime pictures of nature.

The thick curtain by which her painting was con-

ceased, yielded to the approaching rays of the sun, gradually became transparent, and at length totally disappeared. I sat backwards in the coach, and next to a window, whence I looked to the points of the east and south, as the road varied its direction. The mild tints cast by the twilight over an undulating landscape, assuming form and verdure as the light pencilled the unshaped masses of darkness, excited in my mind pleasing and tranquil sensations. The sides of the hills were spotted with mansions, which, though too distant to be examined by the eye, spoke to the imagination all the effects of the beauty and convenience attached to architecture. Here and there a fleecy fog, more or less rarified, hanging over the moister meadows, added a pleasing object to the scene. It was a scene of calm repose, animal life was suspended in sleep; all was motionless, but the vehicle in which I was carried along the side of a hill favourable to the prospect I surveyed; all was quiet but the feet of our horses, which clattered on the firm road the constant echoes of an even trot. For some time I continued to contemplate the country with placid satisfaction; the perturbation of the preceding day subsided into calm acquiescence to the will of Providence; and my resolution to banish pride and cherish philosophy strengthened with my solitary reflections.

I was awakened from my philosophical trance by the pressure of my sleeping neighbour, whose head and shoulders had lain a considerable while a dead weight upon my back. I turned to relieve myself, and, without waking her, placed her in a straight posture; but from which she immediately declined to pillow her cheek on the plump arm of a fat man on the other side of her: my eyes were then detained in the coach by the ludicrous position of our travelling group. It was the first time I had travelled

all night, and a scene which is perhaps one of the most common in life, as it is nightly repeated on a hundred different routes, in a hundred different carriages, at once amused and shocked me. Sleep has afforded the poet and the painter some charming images of

Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shoots forth peculiar graces—

but here to me it appeared destitute of its natural distinction; it wanted the character of repose, which was lost in the sunk neck and nodding head; an incongruity which at first gave me an unpleasing sensation, terminating, however, in the effect the poet says must be produced by pictures of a horse's neck joined to the human head, of feathered limbs jumbled together from different beasts, of the bust of a beautiful woman edging off at the hips into the tail of a fish:

Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?*

Probably the disposition to smile was excited, or at least augmented, by the heterogeneous figures presented to my sight. An upright, lusty farmer, resembling a pocket of wool, buttoned into a great coat, with a red mask in a Welch wig on the top of it, contrasted the slight curved spine of a tall youth in a blue surtout edged with scarlet, whose narrow head, enveloped in a fur cap, and swinging to the oscillation of the coach, occasionally struck and bounded from the knees of the young lady by me. Next him sat a thin old lady, whose body was kept erect by a pair of stiff stays, the edge of which assisted her shoulders to support a shrivelled visage, dancing to

* Would you not laugh such pictures to behold?

the motion of the vehicle. On my side of the carriage a pretty girl reclined on the arm of a man, less bulky, and more shaped than his opposite neighbour, but whose dimensions, had he been on the same side, would have completely filled the seat.

The sight of human beings thus packed in a machine, and hurried in a state of insensibility over a great part of the kingdom, made me shudder ; till reflection brought to my mind the great convenience and advantage gained by this expeditious mode of travelling, and the merit of bartering ease for time. This thought should also, perhaps, have veiled all the traits of ridicule which I observed in the persons and postures of my fellow-travellers ; for, to a just mind it is only folly that is ridiculous, and, if I forgive the risible emotion they created, it is only because I was at an age when novelty is an apology for the mistakes of inexperience.

I did not spend much time in looking at the sleeping group ; the increasing light drew my eyes again to the window to behold the sun rising in all his majesty. This was no novel scene to me, but it is one that never tires, one constantly attended with the delight of novelty, with the wonder, the awe, the adoration of experience. What can equal in grandeur the darting of the rays from beneath the horizon, followed gradually, yet rapidly, by the refulgent orb that emits them !

His vivifying power was immediately acknowledged. Larks from various spots, ascended in strait lines, fluttering and singing as they rose. The woods resounded with a thousand different notes. In one field a shepherd's boy was removing hurdles from the sheep-fold to liberate his flock ; in another a man was collecting milch-cows, that instinctively walked homewards, followed by a little girl. All was life and

motion. My soul caught a glow from the pure scene,
and to the instinctive hymn of the birds,

That vocal up to Heaven's gate ascending
Bore on their wings and in their notes his praise,

I added the conscious adoration of reason in the
words of our first parents :

Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair ; thyself how wondrous then !
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above the Heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.

The obscurity of my birth, and the dependence of my state, had given an early bias to my mind, and led me to seek a parent in imagination in the first cause of my being ; for my education had not suffered me to be indifferent to a relation of so important a nature ; and, though I was several years older before my mind was fully fixed on religious subjects, I can boldly say that a consciousness of the Deity being the supreme spring of my existence has afforded me the most exquisite reflections of my life. Young as I was at the death of my benefactress, it solaced the gloom of misfortune, and it has supported me since in trials which I should have ill sustained without it. Nor shall I be less candid in confessing that I have often felt acutely from finding myself unworthy of the great and adorable source of being, to the sacred impression of whose presence I owe the most valuable stores of my memory.

Yes ! like those of other men, my heart was the soil of the passions ; but, nipped, as it were, by fortune and by study, I had time, before they were called forth by the world, to investigate the nature of them, and to secure that impression, which, if

strongly made, must always prove their most powerful corrective. From the want of it the senses are ever at war with reason ; wealth is guided by imagination, and ignorance is not restrained by poverty. Ye fortunate few, whom necessity like mine, or the wisdom of parental care has early led to commune with the sky, be sensible of the blessing, cherish the prerogative which, whether in adversity or prosperity, is the most valuable of your being!

Having continued for some time lost in admiration at the scene before me, I suddenly found it shut out by the winding of the road, which now hedged the carriage on either side ; I sunk back in my seat, and shutting my eyes, fell again into a reverie on my situation, from which I was roused by the same cause that roused my companions from sleep, the stopping of the coach to change horses. We interchanged the common civilities, and agreed to alight and breakfast. Neither daylight nor eating loosened the tongues of the travellers, whose conversation was rounded by remarks on the fineness of the morning, and praises of the toast and butter.

Nor was the progress of the journey more brilliant ; for after a general expression of wonder at the bulk, form, and rubicund visage of the huge farmer whom we dropped at the last stage, each sunk into meditation, or at least into silence. I was as much inclined to taciturnity as my fellow-travellers, and fatigue overpowering me, I gave them, in my turn, an opportunity of diverting themselves with my restless slumber. Whether they took their revenge or not I do not know, I opened my eyes as we entered Bath, and a few minutes after, we parted to meet no more.

In this celebrated city curiosity detained me two days ; I found much pleasure in surveying the town and the vale on either side of it, but the survey once

taken I felt no inclination to repeat it. Not because I could have found no new objects ; but a sensation arose in my heart as I sat in the pump-room, that banished from it all delight in structures and designs resulting from the ingenuity of man ; *magna civitas, magna solitudo*. Amidst a concourse of my fellow-creatures I was a solitary being. Mixed groups of both sexes were continually coming in and going out. They walked arm in arm, they talked and interchanged their smiles, they accosted and were accosted ; the social reverberations of the heart awakened pleasure and gave a zest to existence, which is not only infinitely superior to all the enjoyment that can be derived from inanimate sources, but necessary to render it either vivid or permanent. To me this necessary ingredient was wanting ; in the smiling throng around me no heart was responsive to mine. To not a man or woman about me could I impart the satisfaction I had received, in viewing the place they inhabited : no one cared what my satisfaction had been, and to no one was my sentiment or smile of the slightest importance. A school-boy at Reading, I had mixed with boys in the enjoyment of juvenile sports, whence had sprung that kind of regard which gratified for the time, but which an early separation, diversity of connexion, and change of pursuits soon obliterated. At Oxford the sense of my situation restrained me from forming intimacies, but in the course of my studies I mixed with other students who were not unwilling to listen to my remarks, and to whose communications I was not indifferent. I had consequently never been sensible of a void in my heart : but now Reading and juvenile sports had been long removed from it ; Oxford, study, and fellow-students no longer

filled it: I was at Bath, where not one smile of the joyous faces that surrounded me was for me; where not a look sought my regard. How painful was the void! how well do I remember it!

I returned to my inn, discharged my bill, and pursued my journey. Alas! thought I, as the coach left the city, I have no reason to complain of Bath; my feeling there is but one of the inevitable unhappy results of civilized society. The doors of huts scattered over some remote, undistinguished spot, would all fly open to shelter from a shower one, who, if he were at a distance from a gateway, would get well soaked at Bath. In the one place he would find refreshment from hospitality, in the other he would starve from civilization.

Yet if I had no reason to complain; I had not the less cause to lament that form had shut up the hearts of mankind, and that although there was ample place in my own I could find none to take it. I surveyed in mind the whole world, and found myself moving on the surface of it a deserted creature, deprived of the ties of nature, excluded from friendship, unknown, unconnected with my own species. My heart beat violently, my bosom swelled, and forgetting that I was observed, I exclaimed, "Great God! I am alone!" and burst into tears.

For some time I indulged the emotion, and continued weeping, till gradually falling into a train of thought to which my singular position and my studies had given my mind a bias, I again felt an elation of spirit in looking up to the divine source of my being. "Yes! eternal Fountain of life and love! in thee shall I ever find a parent and a friend. O make me worthy of thy presence, and I shall never be alone!" Addressing, in enthusiastic silence this apostrophe to the Creator and Ruler of the uni-

verse, I continued, my hat concealing the greater part of my face, to recline in the corner of the coach, forming resolutions for my conduct in life.

CHAPTER III.

Morland's reception at Holcomb—Precept and example.

NOTHING occurred on my journey worthy of remembrance. Time was, if we may credit the wits of former days, when stage-coaches teemed with adventures; with fun and with frolic: jests, songs, and love, sprung spontaneously on the high-road. Travellers must certainly have been merrier and more amorous in those days than in ours. In the present age, whatever pranks Momus and Cupid play elsewhere, they are no longer the deities of stage-coaches, where the generality of travellers shut their hearts with the door, and retire within themselves to meditation, vacuity, or sleep.

I arrived at Exeter too late to proceed to Holcomb the same day, I therefore engaged a bed at the inn where I alighted, but rose early next morning to prepare for my interview with the vicar of Holcomb, and, putting on my mourning suit, enquired the way, and set out on foot for the vicarage, which was but a few miles from the city.

Mr. Whitaker received me kindly, but my philosophy had not yet so fully operated on my heart as to prevent my feeling something humiliating in his kindness. "Poor fellow!" said he, "I will do what I can for you. I know of no vacant place at present, but it will be very unlucky indeed if I do not hear of an insolent valet being discharged

“from some good family in this neighbourhood, in the course of a month or two; in which case I have no doubt of your being well received on my recommendation; after which you will have to depend entirely upon your own conduct and the character you establish. In the mean time, Morland, endeavour to get rid of a little of the ease of your address and manner.”

“Were they,” cried I, as my blood mounted to my face, “deficient in respect?”—“I must be plain with you, my good lad, for your own sake,” replied the vicar; “your bow was a mere inclination of your head and shoulders from the left to the right: in your attitude the weight of your body is thrown on one leg; the outlines of your person form gentle curves, and your hat is pendulous between a thumb and finger, which hardly deign to press the brim sufficiently tight to prevent its falling to the ground. You would never get hired if you presented yourself in this way. A footman bows straight forward, stands upon both legs, erect, and grasps the brim of his hat, which he holds steadily close to his thigh. You understand me, I dare say, and will agree, that a man ought to be whatever he undertakes.”

Whatever ease there might have been in my manner, this harangue of the vicar’s completely discarded it. I blushed still deeper than before. I changed my position as chance directed; and scarcely knew whether I stood on my head or my heels.

“I do not mean to hurt you, my boy,” continued Mr. Whitaker, observing my confusion, “for I assure you I am very much interested by the account Scot has given me of you, and what I say is entirely the result of my good-will towards you.” This I believed to be the truth, and it was spoken in time to prevent my forfeiting his kindness by a hasty

declaration suggested by an honest pride. I was going to say that he had made me sensible I should never suit any place he could obtain for me ; but his remark, accompanied with a good natured look, restrained my tongue, and I stammered out a different sentence expressive of my sense of his kindness.

“ Be assured,” said he, “ that true philosophy “ consists in adapting ourselves to our situation in “ life, and in securing happiness to the mind, by rendering it independent of all externals.”—“ *Can* “ the mind be rendered independent of externals, “ Sir, or was it ever intended by its Creator that it “ should ?”

The vicar looked at me as if he meant to lecture me likewise on the language appropriate to my condition ; but if that were his first thought he dropped it, and vouchsafed to answer my question philosophically. “ Modern times exhibit comparatively but “ few examples of stoicism, yet modern times can “ afford many instances of great souls that have the “ complete command of their emotions and passions, “ that place happiness in the consciousness of rectitude and native dignity, that consider fortuitous “ gratifications as beneath wisdom, bear the injustice of fortune with indifference, defy the attacks “ of malice, and disregard the slights of casual superiority ; men, who envelope themselves in the “ covering of their actual condition in life, to look “ with pity on the agitated multitude, and pass with “ unruffled spirits through all the buffets of a stormy “ world. Without this what are we ? The sport of “ the whims and insolence of others, and the victim “ of our own fancy. Certainly the mind *can* be rendered independent of externals ; certainly it *was* “ intended by its Creator that it should. Are we “ not expressly directed to cast off the things of this

“ world ? Did not one philosopher desire the conqueror of the world to stand from betwixt him and the sun, and did not another, in a state of slavery, calmly warn his tyrant that he would break his leg, and bore the fracture unruffled ? In short, my boy, we must be philosophers possessing inward independent happiness, or we must mingle with the herd, and eat our bread in bitterness. I thank God I am myself a living testimony of a mind independent of externals. My vicarage, though small, yields me a comfortable subsistence, and I neither dream of lawn, nor ape the venerable graces of the mitre. I am only a country clergyman, yet nothing can disturb my happiness, nothing ruffle the serenity of my mind ; and if I were in the condition of a domestic to-morrow, it should be the same thing.”

I listened attentively to this discourse ; I thought it a mixture of good sense and learning, and I bowed implicitly to the worthy vicar’s understanding, experience, and virtue. “ Sir,” said I, “ I am convinced that most of the evils of life are the offspring of perverted imagination : men affix ideal importance to insignificant things and circumstances, and are regardless of those that possess intrinsic value. Your conversation shall not be lost upon me ; indeed my unexpected calamity in the death of my benefactress, and my previous situation, have prepared my mind to turn the sound principles of philosophy to advantage. How to comfort myself in my new station, and to reconcile myself with patience to the unaccountable events of life, has occupied my thoughts throughout my journey, and though my first attempts at a character to which I am unaccustomed may be awkward, I am resolved to submit to the will of Providence,

“and to endeavour to form my mind to the enjoyment of those objects that rank far above outward appearances.”

“You speak very sensibly,” replied the vicar—
“above all things attend to your temper; gain an absolute command over it, and, let what will happen, never suffer it to be ruffled. If a wise man struggles against oppression, he does it calmly; and the best punishment of an insult is not to feel it. Without this command of ourselves we must be perpetually at the mercy of others.”

I was acknowledging the justness of Mr. Whitaker's philosophy, and thanking him for his advice, when a lad in a livery of purple or pompadour cloth, trimmed with a rich woollen lace, entered the room with a solemn face, and gave a letter to his master, who, casting his eye on the superscription and seal, asked if Sir Nicholas's servant waited. “No, Sir,” said the lad, “he left it in his way to Exeter, said he was in a hurry, and that there was no answer required.”—“Very well,” said the vicar, “I shall perhaps be at Broke-hall sooner than he is expected back. The chaise clean?”—“Yes, Sir.”—“And the bay mare up?”—“Yes, Sir.”—“Give her her corn in about half an hour, and see that the harness is nice, and every thing in order.”

The boy being gone, the vicar turned to me, and observed that this day might decide my fortune. “This letter,” said he, “is from Sir Nicholas Broke, a man possessed of immense wealth, part of which consists of large estates, some in this part of Devonshire, and others in Suffolk. He has besides money laid out on mortgages, and money in the funds; there are few richer commoners in the kingdom. I am very familiar at Broke-hall; I may say, in a manner at home. We are upon an intimate footing. I think my lady's man is losing

“favour, and his place would just be the thing for you. I will not forget you, Morland, be assured.”

Saying this, Mr. Whitaker carelessly broke the seal of the letter he held in his hand; but he had no sooner looked at the contents than his blood flew into his face, his eyes flashed fire, and his lips quivered. He bit them again and again, and endeavoured to suppress his emotions, but in vain; after two or three strides across the room, he broke out into the most violent reprobation of the Baronet.—“Fool! fool! senseless, arrogant, stupid brute!”

Here he paused; but whether from want of apt words to suit his rage, or from being disabled to utter them by the choaking of his voice before it came to the direction of his tongue, I know not. He stood motionless for some time, his countenance alone violently agitated. The convulsive muscles of the eyebrows, cheeks, and lips, indicated the tempest in his mind, which pent, within for want of expression, seemed to threaten destruction to his frame; and I stood looking at him in amazement, expecting every moment to see him fall into a fit, from which I am confident he was saved by my calmly asking him of whom he spoke. My question brought his wandering ideas to a point, and letting loose his tongue, aided the impeded circulation of the blood.

“Of the most arrogant upstart,” said he, “that ever fortune daubed with lace; of a low-lived, illiterate, conceited scoundrel; a fellow that knows nothing of life or manners, who is mean enough to associate with low people, and insufferably proud when in company with persons of distinction. The hound, after riding cheek-by-jowl all the morning at a chace with any dirty black-leg, will sit with him, hail-fellow-well-met, and talk over a bottle all night of ribaldry and fox-hunting; but if a Lord comes to his house, he suddenly, forsooth, turns

“ choice, and not only excludes his companions of
“ the chace, but forgets what is due to a real gentle-
“ man. Forgets! the blockhead never knew. He
“ never was a gentleman himself—his fortune was
“ accidental, his title was purchased; nay, his very
“ name I am well assured is not B,r,o,k,e, but
“ B,r, double o,k; which he readily misspelled when
“ the late Baronet, whose son was drowned, was
“ seeking among his distant relations for one whom
“ he might adopt as his heir; nor is the wretch alto-
“ gether clear from suspicion of having come foully
“ into the fortune.”

Here the vicar subjoined every scurrilous epithet that passion suggested to his memory, and concluded his invective with reading the Baronet's note aloud, accompanied by a contemptuous laugh, in which he was not actor enough to conceal that pique and resentment predominated. The note was short, and merely stated that Sir Nicholas could not have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Whitaker that day at Broke-hall, as the Duke of M. had unexpectedly arrived the day before, and was not to depart till the day after.

“ A Duke!” continued the vicar, “ a Duke! He
“ shall know that the vicar of Holcomb is company
“ for any man that enters his doors.—All ignorance
“ —the fellow has not learned, and never will learn,
“ that though rank and title serve to distinguish fa-
“ milies and give precedence in ceremony, the ex-
“ tensive dignity of gentleman, conferred by educa-
“ tion and manners, renders all who have a right
“ to it, fit companions for one another. You shan't
“ go into this family, Morland. No consideration
“ will ever be shown for your feelings. Though re-
“ duced to servitude by untoward fortune, you have
“ imbibed a spirit which must daily and hourly be
“ wounded and irritated by the indelicacy and

“ coarseness of this brute.” I have another family
“ in my eye, of a very different cast : and now I re-
“ collect, it was but the other day they were enquir-
“ ing for a young man. They live a few miles on
“ the other side of Exeter. I’ll give you a letter
“ this moment.”

Saying this, the vicar pulled his writing-table to him, but with such a jerk, that, running upon castors, it flew beyond him with a rapidity equal to the impetuous power that communicated its motion, and he had to stop it with his opposite hand ; which he did, accompanied by a vehement expression that surprised me not a little. “ Damn the table,” exclaimed he, “ I wonder what the devil they put castors
“ to it for.” He then threw himself into his easy chair, which being light, and provided with similar rotatory bodies, was instantly set a going by the force with which he flung his whole weight into it. He caught at the table, and that being, as we have seen, equally well contrived for motion, and the lighter body, instead of stopping, followed the other, and in this manner the table, chair, and vicar were whirled a yard or two along the floor by the same invisible impetus that had previously thrown the blood into his face, and agitated the muscles of his countenance. “ See ! see ! see !” cried he ;
“ was there ever any thing like this ? Why the
“ devil’s got into every thing. I’ll send this in-
“ stant for the carpenter to come and saw off these
“ confounded machines. Ring the bell, do.”

I did not immediately obey, not imagining that he meant what he said. “ Why don’t you ring the bell,
“ Sir ?” said he, loudly, and looking sternly at me.
“ I think, Sir ” — “ Think ! Zounds what business
“ have you to think ? Oh ! I see very plainly that
“ you will never do for a footman.” I immediately touched the bell ; perhaps a little more strongly

from this remark; and unfortunately I was not aware of the quick and continued vibration that even a slight pull produced, so that I was myself surprised at the violent ringing I caused. "So you are in a passion?" exclaimed the vicar. I assured him I was not, but ignorant with what ease the bell rang. "And pray," continued he, "what are you laughing at?" I never was more astonished than at this question, for I was not conscious even of a smile. "Laughing, Sir?" said I. "Do you echo my words?" cried he. "Indeed, young man, you must learn to behave better before I can venture to recommend you."

Here the purple-liveried youth, who had made his appearance before, came in. "What do you want?" said his master, whose anger had already erased his intention from his memory. "You rang the bell, Sir."—"Oh! true," said the vicar, endeavouring to recollect himself, "I shall not go out to-day, you may turn the mare into the field again."

The entrance of the boy having once more broken the course of Mr. Whitaker's anger, it did not return immediately into its channel. He had, while venting his passion successively on the castors and on me, unconsciously shoved the table and chair into their usual place, and when the servant opened the door, he had involuntarily taken a pen out of his inkstand to conceal his emotion, which he now began to be ashamed of, but could not suddenly expel from his mind. He remained for some minutes sullenly silent, his countenance resembling the conclusion of a storm, when the wind is abated but the clouds continue to lower. He then rose, and without opening his lips, quitted the room, leaving me astonished, and at a loss what to do.

I was not, however, left long in this state, for I had scarcely begun to reflect on the extravagant and

inconsistent effects of anger, when the lad whose presence had restrained it, brought me a message from his master, desiring me to call again the next day about the same hour. His visage no longer bore the marks of premature gravity; his brows were unbended, and an arch grin displayed his teeth. Coming up to me, he nodded his head back toward the door, and with a wink asked me what I had been doing to his reverence, to put him in such a taking.

"I heard him," said he, "and just now when he bade me tell you come to-morrow, he looked all one as pale as ashes." I asked him if his master was often in such a taking. "Yes, zhure," replied he, "whensoever ought goes contrary to his will he pats himself in a waundy strout; yet he be a main good-hearted soul for all that, and always twice as good-natured as before, when he have been cross. Sukey and me never cares for his passions, caze we knows how good he be afterwards. Gin so be as you have a favour to ask, you maun take this for a lucky bodement, and come your ways over to the vicarage in time to-morrow."

I thanked the boy for his friendly information, and was inclined to question him concerning the Broke family, as well as to make some enquiries respecting that on the other side of Exeter, to whom his master was going to write a letter for me when the impertinent castors interfered and frustrated the hopes he had raised: but I was afraid of affording electrical matter for bursting some unexhausted cloud, therefore, lest the good vicar should suspect me of talking of him with his servant, I only said that I would attend to his advice; and immediately leaving the vicarage I returned to Exeter, meditating on the various effects of the most tremendous of the passions, and particularly in such a character as Mr. Whitaker's, in which neither the conviction of the

intellect nor the benevolence of the heart were sufficient to restrain it within bounds ; and in which the tempest of rage was sure to be succeeded by the perturbed calm of humility. “ This,” says the moralist, “ is the round of a passionate man’s life ; he “ contracts debts when he is furious, which his virtue, if he has virtue, obliges him to discharge at “ the return of reason. He spends his time in out- “ rage and acknowledgment, injury and reparation.”

Non Dindymene, non adytis quatit
Mentem sacerdotum incola Pythius,
Non Liber æque, non acuta
Sic geminant Corybantes æra,
Tristes ut iræ.

HOR.

Yet O ! remember, not the god of wine,
Nor *Pythian Phæbus* from his inmost shrine,
Nor *Dindymene*, nor her priests possess,
Can with their sounding cymbals shake the breast,
Like furious anger.

FRANCIS.

CHAPTER IV.

The condescension of shame—Vexatious results from a trivial cause.

THE hint given by the vicar’s boy was not lost upon me ; I repaired early the next morning to Holcomb, and was fortunate enough to catch my patron at home, just as he had breakfasted. I immediately perceived the truth of the information which the youth had given me. The vicar’s countenance was placid, and he received me with a kindness that bordered on obsequiousness. He asked me to sit down, which he

had not done the day before, and when he observed that I continued standing, he stood likewise. He was all mildness: the oath that had polluted his lips was foreign to his heart; neither the table nor chair had been robbed of its castors; and even the Baronet and his Duke seemed to be forgotten. He took no notice, however, of the scene that had passed, nor did he give me another lecture on philosophy or temper, but proceeded immediately to the object in view.

“Morland,” said he, “I really feel anxious to be of use to you, and I am glad I thought of the Joneses. Mr. Jones has an excellent heart and amiable manners, his wife and children are delightful, and his fortune is ample. If you get established in that family I shall think you lucky. I wrote a letter before breakfast: here it is,” said he, taking it out of the table-drawer. “I have spoken of you in terms that cannot fail of success, but I have not mentioned your education or your misfortune, lest it should rather operate against your being engaged; and I advise you to keep them a profound secret, for be assured, that no man likes to be waited upon by one who has any pretensions to equality; and were it known that you had studied as a gentleman at Oxford, you would never get a place. Take care, therefore, how you commit yourself.”

I assured Mr. Whitaker that I was sensible of the wisdom of this advice, and would follow it; that his relation, Mr. Scot, in teaching me to yield to the inflexible ordinance of necessity, had also kindly instructed me how to soften its rigour by combining the study of mankind with the humble duties of the station to which I had fallen; and that my disagreeable reflections on the one side, were compensated by the gratifications that presented themselves to me

on the other. I then thanked him for the kind concern he took in my welfare, and, putting the letter which he had given me into my pocket, I bade him good day. He desired that I would acquaint him with the result of the application to Mr. Jones, and that I would not forget, whenever I was placed, to call occasionally and let him know how I went on. Walking by my side to the parlour door, he patted my shoulder as I opened it, and said, "God bless you!" The expression, and the manner of delivering it, brought a tear to my eye. I bowed in silence, withdrew, and shut the door after me.

The vicar's *God bless you* was the dictate of his natural benevolence; but his manner was the result of conscious misconduct, the reparation of which produced unusual condescension. I could not but feel for this man, because he evidently condemned what was wrong in himself, and nothing so completely disarms judgment of its severity, as sincere self-condemnation; but I wondered, at the same time, how a man thus open to his own conviction, should yet continue so unguarded as to be overcome by the attacks of passion, and transported by them to a degree that obliterated every idea not only of virtue, but of common propriety. I here commenced my study of man, and I found it more difficult than I had taught myself to believe. To see character and its effects requires but experience and common observation; but to explain the nature and causes of character, to account for the inconsistencies of the same mind, and to trace actions to adequate motives, is a task not easily performed. I generally found myself unequal to it, particularly at this period of my life, and though, as I advanced, I ventured to minute lucubrations, which I thought well grounded, yet I must own that I have been most frequently obliged

to give up the point, and to refer what I could not settle to the influence of constitution acting without the control of reason; from which partly arises the variety of character to be found in the human race, for if it were to be marked by reason, it would of course be more uniform. That both the anger and the condescension of the vicar of Holcomb were constitutional, I have long ceased to doubt. He was not deficient in intellectual powers, but these were applied to the bare act of reasoning, not to enforce a practical submission to the edicts of reason; to investigate the right, not to pursue it; to detail the pride, not live by the rules of philosophy.

With Mr. Whitaker's letter in my pocket I proceeded towards Exeter, the appearance of which broke the train of thought to which the scenes I witnessed at Holcomb had given birth, and my recommendation to Mr. Jones coming into my mind, I recollected that the vicar had not told me where he lived. The morning before, he had only said that he lived a few miles on the other side of Exeter, but not a word of the place when he gave me the letter; an omission no doubt owing to the state of his mind, divided as it was between the disguised remembrance of folly and visible repentance. I concluded, however, that there was a full direction on the letter, which my own feelings at the time I received it prevented my attending to. A doubt so easily removed was soon converted into certainty. I took the letter out of my pocket, and found the place of Mr. Jones's residence likewise omitted in the superscription; it was simply, John Jones, Esq. Trivial as this appeared to be, it was vexatious: I had already walked six miles, which I was not inclined to double, as I had also to go through the town and some miles beyond it. I stopped, debating whether to return to Holcomb, or

trust to receiving intelligence at my inn, and I decided on the latter, not doubting that it would be very easy for me to find the way to Mr. Jones's seat.

When I arrived at the inn, the landlord being gone out I applied to my landlady, who without hesitation directed me to the road towards Pinhoe, on which she told me the house I was in quest of stood, about three miles from the city. I lost no time, and though I passed first through a heavy road of red loam, and by the side of a long dead wall, was soon at Mr. Jones's gate, where, on ringing, I was saluted with the tremendous barking of a couple of fierce mastiffs, that, on my entering the outer gate, appeared on either side of the coach-way, and were only prevented from tearing me to pieces by the massy irons that chained them to their separate houses, and restrained their efforts to fly at me. The man that opened the gate looked almost as savage as the wild beasts I had to pass, when he asked me what I wanted.

This salutation damped the feelings which were excited by the pleasing account Mr. Whitaker had given me of Mr. Jones and his family, and I proceeded with awe round the house to the offices, as directed by the porter, on my informing him that I had a letter for his master. Turning by the corner of the mansion, I saw a man cleaning harness at the stable door, and going up to him asked if I could see Mr. Jones. "You must go to the kitchen and ax," said he, "I am coachman." As he kept his eye fixed on his harness, and whistled as he worked, I had no encouragement to put any other question, not even which was the kitchen, whither chance directed my steps.

The cook, whom I found preparing materials for the fire, desired me to go up stairs, where I should find somebody.

At the head of the kitchen-stairs I met a chamber-

maid, who would have taken no more notice of me than of a cat, if I had not asked her if she would carry a letter to her master for me, to which she replied that it was not her place, and that I must speak to one of the footmen. "Where are they?" said I; but the enquiry was fruitless, for the chambermaid, who had never slackened her pace, was out of hearing in a trice.

A footman happening to cross the hall, at that moment, with a tray in his hand, I asked him, as he advanced to the stairs to deliver a letter for me to Mr. Jones; on which he desired me to step into the right hand parlour, saying he would come to me as soon as he had set down the tray. I thanked him, and again doubting much whether the master of the people who had fallen in my way would answer the partial description of the vicar, I crossed the hall, and, without reflecting to whose person the man's direction referred, opened the door of the parlour on my own right hand, and walked in.

Never shall I forget my astonishment on finding myself in the midst of the family, who had just been taking their forenoon's repast. I knew not whether to retire or remain, till observing an encouraging look in the whole party, I ventured to shut the door. I held my hat fast in my hand, and, remembering the vicar's lecture on bowing, made what I thought an awkward kind of a bow. Had it possessed all the grace of Apollo, it could not have produced a more instantaneous effect: the family, not less surprised than myself, and taking me for a gentleman—I had on my mourning-suit—all rose, and returned my obeisance. Confounded by the respect paid me by persons to whom I came recommended as a servant, I was frightened at the idea of producing my recommendation; and I verily believe if I could have invented any plea for my intrusion, that I should have

descended to a falsehood to relieve the oppression I felt at the moment: but truth served the purpose better, by presenting me a scene I should have lost had I departed unknown.

A rapid survey of the countenances of the Joneses convinced me that the vicar's partiality had carried him a great length in his character of them: not a face in the group but was distinguished by traits of sourness; and indeed the children would have greatly belied their parents had this not been the case. The repetition of Mr. Jones's bow seeming to ask the nature of my visit, I collected all my courage to stand the result of my confession, and, before I gave the vicar's letter, I endeavoured to soften the impression of its contents, by making the best excuse I could for my abrupt appearance. "Sir," said I, "I blush for the mistake I have occasioned—" "—Pray make no apology, Sir;" cried Mrs. Jones with a smirking air—"won't you take a seat?" This misplaced civility was like a clap of thunder on my ears. I could have sunk into the floor—I wished my mourning-suit at Jericho. "Madam," said I, "I am more and more confounded by your condescension, and scarcely now can bring myself to tell you that I come—recommended to you as a servant."

The electric fluid itself is not more rapid in communication than the fire of low pride. The change of countenance was instantaneous through the whole circle. Mrs. Jones plumped herself down on her seat, the elder daughters followed their mamma's example, whispering and giggling; a younger daughter, about fourteen, stooped, as if to pick up something off the carpet, and, in rising, slid herself on her chair as if ashamed that she had quitted it; and the father, knitting his brows, continued surveying me from head to foot, while I strove to extricate myself from

my embarrassment as well as I could ; and I thought the best way was to present Mr. Whitaker's letter at once. Before I could get it out of my pocket, however, Mr. Jones vociferated ; " Upon my word, Sir, " your presuming to thrust yourself into the room is " no great recommendation." I declared it was accidental. " It can't be," said Mrs. Jones, " there " are people enough about the house. My dear Mr. " Jones, this fellow is an impostor ; he neither looks " nor speaks like a servant." I appealed to the letter, which I now gave to Mr. Jones, to remove the lady's suspicion of imposture, but far from having that effect, it served only to confirm it.

The gentleman having jerked the letter out of my hand as I presented it, and read the direction, passed it unopened to his lady, eyeing me at the same time. " I would open it, if I was you, my dear ;" said she, giving him back the letter. " Oh no !" cried he, " by no means, I could not answer doing " that."—" I would commit him then," replied she, " for depend upon it, there's something we don't understand at the bottom of this."—" Young man," said the magistrate, " you must give a good account " of yourself, or I shall send you to prison. Who is " this letter from ?" I replied, from Mr. Whitaker. " What Mr. Whitaker ?" I said, the vicar of Holcomb. " Very well ! I know him : I see him sometimes at the sessions and meetings. Now, for " whom is this letter ?"—" That, Sir," said I, " the " direction will show : I presumed it was for you."—" Yes, I find," cried he, " that you are a very presuming fellow." At this Mrs. Jones and the young ladies laughed heartily, conceiving it to be wit. After several renewed bursts of ha ! ha ! they composed their features into their usual state of solemn ugliness, and Mr. Jones proceeded thus : " Now, Sir, this letter is not for me ; and coupling

“ this circumstance with the odd and suspicious way
“ in which you have stolen into my house, I am fully
“ warranted to take you for a thief till you prove
“ yourself not to be one.”

This language, so ill suited to raise respect, roused in me all the feelings with which the sense of honour inspires a gentleman. I was no longer abashed ; but, frowning in my turn, said, I was sorry to find any portion of the administration of justice confided in one capable of so illiberal and immoral a sentiment ; that the maxim of reason and of religion was to believe men innocent till they were proved to be guilty ; nay, though he seemed not to know it, it was the maxim of the law. Mr. Jones surveyed me with mixed indignation and surprise, and, without saying a word, opened the door of an inner room, and went in. As he left the door open, I heard him, though not distinctly, talking with another person ; but the words, *he is some attorney's clerk*, caught my ear ; and a minute after, a man coming to the door, desired me to walk that way. I went forward with a firm step, and shut the door after me, but it was soon gently opened on the other side, and left a little ajar.

“ You talk mighty fine, young man,” said Mr. Jones, who was sitting at a desk table, “ but notwithstanding what you said there about reason and religion, it is a very different thing as to law, and you may find it so to your cost. Howsomever, I have consulted Mr. Jonathan here, and I find that though you may be a thief, you may likewise not be a thief. Now this letter is directed to a gentleman who lives on the other side of Exeter, as I suppose ; for there may be a hundred John Joneses : but, in the spirit of the laws of this land, to give you a fair chance of escaping, I shall send it over to him along with you ; and if you really be what

“ you say, and this letter is written by the vicar of
“ Holcomb, you may go about your business ; if not,
“ you will be taken to the house of correction. Mr.
“ Jonathan, here is the letter, you will drive him
“ over to Affington in your gig, and I shall order
“ Thomas to ride behind you for greater safety.
“ See Mr. John Jones yourself, and deliver the let-
“ ter into his own hands.”

This was a most unexpected adventure. At first I was not much inclined to submit to the coercive measure proposed by this magistrate, but recollecting the determination I had repeatedly made, to preserve an even mind in the trials to which my singular fate had doomed me, I smiled and was silent, certain of being protected by the Jones of Affington, and happy to be quit of the Jones of Pinhoc.

CHAPTER V.

The danger of delay.

THE gig was soon ready, and I was not at all sorry to take a place in it. Mr. Jonathan drove, Thomas rode after us, and the whelps of Cerberus were less ferocious as we passed them.

I endeavoured to enter into conversation on the way with Mr. Jonathan, but I found him close and guarded, for which, however, I made proper allowance, as his situation might depend upon his prudence, and being satisfied that he could not but think his superior both stupid and brutish, excused his communicating his thoughts to me. In other respects he was civil enough, and was not backward in giving me an account of the country.

In about an hour, having passed through the heart of the town, we were approaching the village of Affington, when Mr. Jonathan, pointing to a road that struck off to the left, told me, that it led to Affington-house, the seat of Mr. John Jones. I took the opportunity to ask him what kind of a man he was. "One of the very best the world produces," said he; "noble, generous, and unassuming, the father of the poor, the friend of the unfortunate. His very name is a protection to those who use it; you are yourself more obliged to it than you imagine; you owe to it your escape from Pinhoe, and the easy manner of your being conveyed hither. If you have any real prospect of being settled at Affington-house, you may account yourself a happy fellow." This panegyric proceeded from an unsuspecting quarter, and even exceeded the vicar's praise; it gave me great and unexpected pleasure.

As we proceeded, lofty woods on the left of the road screened the country for near half a mile, when they terminated, and one of the most enchanting landscapes opened to the view; in which the fine river Ex was seen widening its banks as it flowed in some places on a level with beautiful meadows, in others far below the abrupt declivity of hilly copses. Here and there the sails of vessels, swelled by a steady breeze, arrested the eye; and elegant seats heightened the beauties of the scene. My conductor, at my request, stopped some minutes while I gazed in admiration at nature cultivated and adorned, and now rendered doubly charming by the full vigour of the spring. He then pointed to a simple bar-gate, painted green, saying, it was the entrance to Affington-house. Thomas rode up, and opened it with the head of his whip.

We turned in to the left, continuing a direction a little retrograde through a grove, which now and

then echoed with various wild notes from the lofty branches on either side of us. The way beneath the trees was short, and the west end of the house, with a perspective of the front which looked down the river, broke suddenly upon us. A fine lawn lay before it, spreading up to the grove, while to our left the trees edged off, passing behind it on an ascent. Nothing impeded our passage to the very door, but a sheep or two crossing the path with their yearlings to join the groups that fed and frisked on the lawn. The house was far from being large; the door of it stood wide open, and the eye, carried completely through two halls, rested on the graceful figure of a statue in the garden. As the chaise stopped, a youth in a plain jacket came out, and before the servant that followed us could alight, was at the horse's head, and patting his neck.

Mr. Jonathan asked if he could see Mr. Jones. "Certainly, Sir," said the boy; "he is just come in from riding." We alighted, and as the boy led the chaise from the door, a man in a brown livery with a scarlet cape received us in the hall, and conducted us to his master's library, which, as we walked, was to the left of the inner hall. Mr. Jones almost immediately followed us. Never was there a greater share of benignity collected in the countenance of man. Though I afterwards heard that he was more than fifty years old, I took him at first sight to be between thirty and forty. I watched every look of his eye, as his namesake's clerk unfolded the business that brought him to Affington. He sometimes cast a look at me, listening at the same time with great attention to Mr. Jonathan, who, to do him justice, though he detailed the suspicion and anger of his employer, was neither prolix nor hostile in his narration, which he concluded with delivering the vicar of Holcomb's letter. Mr. Jones smiled as

he read, but resuming his usual look, as he folded it up, asked me how long I had been in this part of the country. I told him how lately I had arrived at Exeter, and the inn where I lodged. He then enquired if I had ever been there before, or was at all acquainted with the country. I answered his questions with the simplicity of truth. On which, turning to Jonathan, he said, mildly; "Neither the countenance nor the voice of this young man be-
"speaks imposture."

Oh! how delicious is such language from such a being! It penetrated to my soul, it gave my heart its first rapture. How could I have pressed him to that heart, had I not been restrained by the sense of propriety!

"But," continued he, "not only his appearance is in his favour, it is a fact that I did speak to the vicar of Holcomb on the subject of this letter, and I am perfectly acquainted with the hand-writing." Jonathan bowed. "You will have the goodness," proceeded the benevolent man, "to give my compliments to Mr. Jones, and say that I am highly pleased with the character contained in this letter. As for you, Morland, you are probably in no hurry, and as I want to talk with you, I shall detain you at present, unless you wish it otherwise."—"Sir," replied I warmly, "I have now no wish on earth but to be commanded by you." Mr. Jones smiled, and Jonathan having repeated his bow and departed, I felt an inexpressible delight in being left with my protector.

"This is a singular adventure, you have had this morning," said he, "but you must not mind it; Mr. Jones of Pinhoe is an odd man, and the best of us are not free from error. But how came you to excite so much suspicion and anger?" In

answer to this question I related the facts circumstantially, and being convinced that pride and anger, arising from the mistake made by the family themselves, had chiefly actuated the Pinhoe magistrate, I ventured to give them as full a colouring as truth would admit. Mr. Jones laughed heartily at my account, and seeing Mrs. Jones with his son and daughter passing the window, he called them in, and made me repeat the whole to them. They were amused with my description, and all spoke to me with such bewitching condescension and graceful ease, that I could have delighted to serve them in any capacity. They were handsome as well as amiable, young Jones resembling his father, and Miss Jones her mother.

Having laughed at my adventure, they pursued their walk and left me again alone with Mr. Jones, with whom in imagination I was already settled. He paused some moments, and then addressed me thus: “Morland, Mr. Whitaker writes in very high terms of you, and I feel great pain to be forced to disappoint your hopes; but he did not rightly understand me. My establishment is full. The person I wanted was one to take a new situation, or rather to discharge the office of three, which in my affairs do not afford full employment even for one person—I mean those of steward, librarian, and secretary. I am in fact my own steward, and want only a man under my immediate direction, to call on my tenants, and keep my accounts. This being easily done, the same person must attend to the care of my books and the arrangement of my library, and also to transcribe fairly whatever may be wanted. It requires a progress in education, knowledge of accounts, a good hand-writing, and some little acquaintance with letters.

" I remember I was not sufficiently explicit with Mr. Whitaker, being engaged on other business at the time."

How did my ears drink in every syllable of this speech—was it a golden dream, or a waking vision? " Oh Sir," cried I, " since I am happy enough to engage your attention, suffer me to inform you, that my education has been far superior to what is required in the offices you mention; you can immediately put it to the test; I am confident I may undertake the situation you propose, and if you will have the goodness to make a trial of me, should you approve of my ability, I will serve you all my life with fidelity and affection, nor ever admit one mercenary thought into my mind."

" Your language," replied Mr. Jones, with a countenance full of compassion, " convinces me that your attainments are above the station you appear in, and I feel now double pain in telling you, that but this very morning after breakfast, I engaged a young man who brought me a strong recommendation from another friend. It would be unjust in me, however, to express any sorrow on the occasion, as he appears in every respect fit for the offices he has undertaken."

A thunderbolt would have been more welcome than this terrible information. I turned pale, tears starting to my eyes soon overflowed my cheeks: I begged pardon in a confused manner; I knew not what I did. The contrast of the characters I had that day seen, the difference of the place to be filled, the delightful expectation excited by my reception, and the shocking reflection of missing such a situation by being a few hours too late, quite overcame me, and I had not even the power of utterance.

" I am sorry," said Mr. Jones, " to see you take

“your disappointment so much to heart. You may be in some immediate distress, perhaps a few guineas may be of use to you.” Seeing him take out his purse, I requested him, though almost choaked by my attempt to speak, not to misconceive the cause of my agitation. “Indeed, Sir, I am not in any immediate distress for money: the poignancy of my distress is occasioned solely by finding how near I was to a happiness which my wayward fate has put aside.”—“Come, come,” said Mr. Jones, “this is not manly—recover yourself—there are other situations to be found: the vicar of Holcomb may soon hear of one still more advantageous, and if any thing occurs that shall put it in my power to be useful to you, I shall not forget you.” He then asked me where I was to be found. I said that I did not yet know myself, as I should not continue at the inn: on which he observed that he could always hear of me by enquiring of Mr. Whitaker, but desired that as soon as I was fixed I would call and let him know. Again refusing his repeated offer of pecuniary assistance, I made my acknowledgments as distinctly as my confusion would allow, and bowing respectfully, left the room.

I walked insensibly through the halls, turning mechanically into the coach-way that led to the grove, which had made so lively an impression on me when I entered it. I saw none of the beauties of Affington; my senses were absorbed in the tumult of my mind. How did I reprobate the man whose passion had been so fatal to my happiness! how did I execrate the passion that had caused the delay, during which such a prize had been snatched from my hope!

While I was bitterly referring this miserable issue of my application to the foolish anger of the vicar of Holcomb, Mrs. Jones with her son and daughter

came out of the wood near the grove, and entering the path, turned towards the house. In a few minutes we met; Mrs. Jones, with the most complacent air, asked me, merely that she might not pass without speaking, if Mr. Jones were still in the library. I answered in the affirmative, and she made an inclination of her head as she went on. So did Miss Jones: and her brother said with a smile, "good day to you!" This added to the sense of my misfortune; I continued reprobating the vicar, and execrating his anger till I arrived at my inn.

CHAPTER VI.

Morland taken ill—Inhuman apprehensions brutally expressed—Patient death of an unknown youth—The folly of suicide—An apothecary—Illusions of the senses—William and Amy—Caution against love.

THOUGH blessed by nature with a disposition not easily irritated, my sensibility was great when it was acted upon by causes against which my reason afforded me no assistance. It was in vain I endeavoured to argue my mind into a patient acquiescence with a disappointment which might have happened to any other man, and to which no misconduct of mine had contributed; for it was unreasonable, it was out of nature not to lament deeply the failure of an advancement so suited to my unexpected lot in life, and which could not have failed to give a happy turn to it.

Fatigued, heated by walking, oppressed and miserable, I threw myself upon my bed, and giving way to tears, yielded my mind a prey to melancholy and painful ideas. I compared my former prospects

previous to my losing Mrs. Waller, with the humble one now before me. I cast my thoughts over the globe in every direction of the compass, and considered myself as an unconnected atom. I contrasted the existence of a menial at Broke-hall, under such a character as that of Sir Nicholas, with the life I might have led at Affington, entrusted, respected, perhaps beloved. I painted to my imagination all the charms of such a lot. I pictured all the family in an infinite variety of points of view: my regular intercourse with Mr. Jones on business; my occasional conversations with him on books and literary subjects; the use I should have of his library, the transcripts I should make for the family, my efforts to please them by translations and compositions, my gradual acquisition of their confidence, esteem, and affection: the only want I felt, that of loving and being beloved, I conceived gratified in consequence of the conduct I meant to pursue, and of the virtues and amiable dispositions of the family.

Whilst fancy thus brought to my mind visionary scenes of happiness, cruel reality presented to me my forsaken, solitary state, doubly miserable by the loss of the opportunity that had so nearly reversed my wretched doom. The vicar's folly mingled with my sad reflections, and the extent of its consequences now rendered it, in my opinion, infinitely more criminal than I had at first thought it—nay, it appeared that he had known of Mr. Jones's desire some time, yet it had only come into his mind accidentally.—I censured, I criminated, I all but cursed him.

Lost in these tumultuous reveries, I lay some hours on the bed, where I should probably have continued much longer, had I not been roused from my trance by the entrance of a chamber-maid, who came to adjust the chamber for the night. The sun had been down some time, but the twilight was yet

sufficient for the purpose. Approaching to turn down the bed, she started at seeing me, and enquired if I were ill. I did not think myself ill till she put the question, and then I found that I was very feverish. On my saying so, she asked if she should put the bed to rights, that I might go into it. I rose to give her leave, and in walking across the room, felt myself both feeble and giddy. I had no appetite, it never occurred to me therefore that I had taken no nourishment the whole day, though I had used uncommon exercise, and I should have ordered nothing, had not the maid, before she left the room, requested to bring me something to do me good. I told her that I did not think I could swallow any thing, but that she might bring me up a bason of thin gruel and a bit of toast, which I would endeavour to take after I was in bed.

She had quitted the room but a few minutes, and I was beginning to undress myself, when the landlady, a tall, lusty woman, of a commanding aspect, opened my door without ceremony, and advancing towards me hastily, said: "Lord! Sir, I hope you a'n't going to be sick here. The chamber-maid tells me you have ordered water-gruel, and that she is sure you are very ill."—"My good lady," replied I, "that I am ill is certain, and I spoke for gruel because, if I can take any thing, that is the most likely to be of service to me."—"Indeed you look very much flushed," said she, putting her hand upon mine and repeating, "Lord, Sir, I hope you are not going to be sick here."—"It is a misfortune to be sick any where," said I, "and the place is not commonly at one's choice."—"Good God! you are in a burning fever," exclaimed she, "I hope you are not going to be sick here. Hadn't you better send for some of your friends to take you home, Sir? You will find it so much more com-

“fortable than at an inn.” Seeing that the woman had her doubts of a stranger who had arrived in a stage-coach, and whose frugal meals gave her no sumptuous opinion of his purse, I told her that I had no friends in Exeter; but that she might depend upon my being able to pay amply for any extraordinary trouble I might occasion. “Why to be sure, Sir,” said she, “you have the looks of a gentleman, and it is not for that I speak, and now posting is so high many a gentleman travels in stage coaches; but, Sir, we met with just such another thing about two months ago, and the poor young gentleman—Lord, Sir, he looked every bit as fair as you may do, but when he died upon our hands, in one of the rooms on this very same floor, we did not find enough about him even to bury him, let alone his bill; and indeed if it had not been for the apothecary, he must have been buried by the parish: and then there was such a pack of troubles in the house with the crowner and his men. Lord! I would not have it to come over again for all the world.”

I was less impressed with my share of this unfeeling address, than with the image of an unfortunate man dying without a friend near him, amongst strangers, and those too of flinty hearts. Instead, therefore, of saying any thing relative to the state I was in, I exclaimed, “Poor fellow! what must he not have suffered!”—“Nay as for that,” said the landlady, “he had no great matter of suffering: the apothecary was very kind to him, though he did not know who was to pay him, and gave him stuff that kept him very easy at last. He could not be said to suffer; he never groaned, nor tossed, nor tumbled about the bed, but was as patient as a lamb: only every now and then he sighed, and tears ran down his cheeks as he lay silent on his

“back.” The image in my mind was rendered doubly interesting by this addition of patient sorrow. I repeated—“Poor fellow! Yes, his sufferings must have been excessive; but it was his soul that suffered most.”—“Lord, Sir! hadn’t you better think of yourself?” cried the landlady. “Do not be afraid; madam,” said I, “I shall not be so fortunate as the gentleman you have been speaking of; there is very little likelihood of my dying: but to satisfy *you*, I *will* think of myself, and I beg you will do me the favour to send for the worthy apothecary who attended your unfortunate guest.”—“I will, Sir; directly,” replied she, “there’s nothing like taking things at first. Lord, Sir, I should be so sorry if any thing was to happen.”

Ill as I was and wretched, I could not help smiling, as she quitted the chamber, at the selfish apprehensions she expressed: but in desiring the apothecary to be sent for, I was less actuated either by her fears or any I had for myself, than by a melancholy curiosity to learn something respecting the stranger who had died at the inn.

I desisted from undressing, that I might see the apothecary before I went to bed, and I sat leaning my head on my hand, figuring to myself a young man with a pale but amiable countenance, yielding himself up to death without a struggle, in the hope of escaping from the pangs inflicted by life. Keeping in view the interesting phantom of my imagination, I meditated on the solitary state of his last moments;

On no fond breast *his* parting soul relied,
No pious drops *his* closing eye consoled;

alone he wept, alone expired. So deserted, at such a period, can the soul preserve its constancy? Dreadful agony! Yet it was soon over, and the spi-

rit quickly classed with congenial beings : but as for me, my solitary state had no such happy termination before it. What congenial spirits could I hope to find on earth in the class to which the fortuitous events of life had driven me? I gave the preference to the stranger's fate, and the preference gave birth to a thought which for a moment presented itself in pleasing colours to me. It *was* but for a moment, I discarded it with horror.—“ Never, never,” exclaimed I, “ will I, while I possess my senses, resort “ to an imaginary remedy, which instead of the effects a narrow intellect proposes, would probably “ heap greater evils on that existence which we may “ alter but cannot extinguish.”

As I said this, the landlady, bringing a candle in her hand, returned with the apothecary. His countenance was prepossessing: he advanced, and with a smile asked if it was usual with me to speak in soliloquies. He then felt my pulse and began to put questions to me, but, wishing to get rid of his conductress, I said I should answer better if we were alone. “ Very true, Sir,” said the landlady, “ it is “ only what is right and proper, and so I shall leave “ you to Mr. Rundle, who will call and let me hear “ how you are before he leaves the house.” This being promised, she put the candle on a table and left the room.

Having suffered Mr. Rundle to convince me that I was in a fever, and endeavoured to convince him that it was trifling, and the consequence of too much exercise, I told him I had heard that he attended the young man who died here. “ *Here !*” said he, casting his eye around, “ and who was so foolish as “ to tell you that he died in this room? but I hope “ you have more sense than to give way to idle impressions.” I did not think it necessary to let this worthy man know that the last part of the in-

formation was from himself; but assuring him that I was superior to the impression he alluded to, I begged him to give me some account of his former patient. "I must first," said he, "pay attention to my present patient, and I insist on your troubling yourself just now with no concern, but that of getting rid of this fever, which does not appear to me to threaten any serious illness if we take it in time." I was impatient to talk of the unfortunate stranger, but he would not indulge me. "In the first place," said he, "I know very little of him; not even so much as his name, and in the next, I have not time to stay. I shall see you to-morrow, and will answer as well as I can any inquiries you may be inclined to make. At present go to bed, keep yourself as composed as possible, and take what I shall send you." He then bade me good night, and went away.

I sat undressing myself near the table, which was at some distance from the bed. I was sensible that the fever was increased, my face was extremely flushed, and the pulses at my temples beat violently. The stranger still occupied my thoughts. I cast my eye on the bed. There he sighed, and wept, and breathed his last. The candle standing on the opposite side of the room, and not having been snuffed since it was brought in, threw a dim light, which my fancy converted into a gloomy one, on the spot so lately the scene of sorrow and of death. The curtains, which were of clean and decent check, were left open at different parts to admit the air. I mechanically loosened the string at my knee, while I gazed upon the pillow, repeating the landlady's words—"he was as patient as a lamb, only every now and then he sighed, and tears ran down his cheeks as he lay silent on his back." My hands ceased to move, I became fixed to my chair, I saw

on the pillow the stranger's head, tears streaming from his eyes, the bed-clothes raised, but lying smoothly over his body. I felt no alarm, and continued looking at the head. How long I was in this position I know not, but a waiter coming in with my medicine drew my attention to the door, and when I again looked at the bed, no head lay on the pillow, and the counterpane presented an even surface.

I was now seriously alarmed, my mind had never been tinctured with a faith in preternatural events, and I ascribed the phantom to its just cause, the agitation of my mind assisting the agitation of my blood in producing an illusion on the retina, proceeding from the brain, not from an outward object. More terrified than if I had believed in spectres, I desired the waiter to put down the medicines and go instantly for Mr. Rundle. While he was gone I again fixed my eyes on the bed, but the phantom appeared no more, my attention being removed from the stranger to myself; and fortunate it was, if that epithet can be rightly applied to the preservation of my life at that juncture, that I determined to send again for the apothecary.

From the account I had given him he thought my fever was merely the effect of over exercise, and he hoped to have allayed it by means of some cooling medicines, but when, on his observing that it was increased, I told him how it had disordered my imagination, he lost no time in bleeding me, and that copiously. The worthy man would have had me go into another room, but I assured him that I had no objection to my own, and he stayed with me till I was in bed, and gave me a powder with his own hand. He then enjoined me to repeat the powders every three hours, and saying that he would leave some directions below, once more bade me good night.

Soon after, my landlady herself came in with a jug of barley-water, which she put by the bed-side, telling me the doctor had desired that somebody should sit up with me, to give me my medicines. "I have sent for a woman," said she, "and I wish to the Lord I had done the same by the other young man, for then he might have taken his physic properly, and who knows but he might have been the better for it." This speech was little less than a confession of murder, but I made no reply to it; I only begged her to give me the barley-water, my thirst being very great. After this I paid no farther attention to what passed in the room. I endeavoured, I determined to compose myself, and, after some contest with restlessness, succeeded: I lay quiet in spite of my disorder, and my imagination dwelled upon the Joneses, and upon the figure I had conceived of the stranger who had been my predecessor in the chamber, but never so vividly as to approach again the resemblance of reality. The powders being given to me regularly, in the morning I fell into an easy sleep, in which I continued till nine o'clock, when I awoke feeble and hungry, but free from fever.

I know not whether I owed this favourable turn most to the natural mildness of my constitution, or to the remembered consequences of neglecting the poor stranger; but in recording this circumstance it would seem ungrateful not to acknowledge an obligation to Mr. Rundle's lancet and powders; at the same time I must say, I believe that men of a more turbulent temperament would not have fared so well, for I have since seen men agitate a slight ailment into a serious disease, and finally sacrifice life itself to impatience. A patient spirit is the best assistant both of the doctor who prescribes for the

body, and of the philosopher who prescribes for the mind.

Celestial Patience ! how dost thou defeat
The foe's proud menace, and elude his hate !
While Passion takes his part, betrays our peace,
To death and torture swells each slight disgrace.
By not opposing thou dost ill destroy,
And wear thy conquer'd sorrows into joy.

Not so patient, however, was my stomach in the morning : seeing me awake, the person who had sat up with me all night began a string of civil inquiries, but I silenced her civility by desiring her to go and bring me immediately a bason of tea, and a round of toast and butter. She was so long gone that it seemed to me that she had as far to send for tea as for physic; and such indeed was the case, for the prudent hostess, alarmed at the unexpected demand, and having no stomach for another coroner's jury, had dispatched a messenger to the apothecary for advice on the occasion. Mr. Rundle thought proper to come himself, and just as I began to lose that virtue of whose benign influence during the night I have been boasting, he entered the room, followed by the nurse with the tea and toast.

Congratulating me on the happy symptoms of health I discovered, he allowed me to make a good breakfast, but not so hearty a one as I was disposed to do; for I had ordered a second round of toast before I had half demolished the first, which he countermanded, assuring me that I partly owed the abatement of the fever to the abstinence of the preceding day. He then dismissed my attendant, and sat down at the bed-side to talk with me. "When you told me last night," said he, "that you had eat nothing all day, and little the day before, and

“ that you had been heated by walking, I thought
“ I might trust the reducing of the fever to the
“ powders; but when, on your prudently sending
“ for me the second time, I found your blood in
“ such a state as to affect your perception, it be-
“ came necessary to take a great quantity of it from
“ you. This has prevented a serious fit of sickness,
“ and perhaps saved your life.” “ What a curious
“ and wonderful effect,” said I, “ is produced on
“ the senses by the disorder of the blood. Had
“ I not recollected the story of Bishop Berkeley I
“ should certainly have become a convert last night
“ to the popular superstition of apparitions.”
“ What is the story you allude to?” said Mr. Run-
“ dle. “ I thought it had been generally known,”
replied I, “ that Berkeley, when engaged in intense
“ study, was accustomed to lock himself into his
“ library, and that one evening in this situation; the
“ servant who usually attended him came up to the
“ table, and asked him if he chose his coffee then,
“ to which he assented, and the servant opened the
“ door, and went out of the room; Berkeley conti-
“ nuing his application on his subject. A little
“ while after this, the man bringing in his master’s
“ coffee at the usual time, knocked for admittance,
“ and was bade to come in. This he could not do,
“ for the door was locked. Startled at this in-
“ formation, Berkeley recollected seeing the servant
“ come in, and go out again after speaking to him,
“ and he was very confident that he had not himself
“ stirred from his books since: the door, conse-
“ quently, had not been opened all the afternoon.
“ He suspected an illusion, and inquiry confirmed
“ his suspicion: no person had been near him. He
“ immediately sent for his surgeon, and by losing
“ some ounces of blood, escaped a fit of illness.”

“ I do not remember the story,” said Mr. Rundle,

“ but I give full credit to it. When I was a young
 “ man, I served some time in the navy. While
 “ surgeon’s-mate of a ship of war on the Jamaica
 “ station, I was attacked at Port-Royal by the yellow
 “ fever. I took my medicines, knew my attendants,
 “ and was perfectly sensible of all that was going on
 “ about me, yet, as I lay in my bed, I plainly saw
 “ my own figure laid out in a coffin on stools close
 “ by me. The structure of man is wonderful, but
 “ investigation and experience have taught us to
 “ account for extraordinary effects by physical
 “ causes. It is not fever alone that creates such
 “ apparitions; ignorance and fancy, some of the
 “ passions, hysterical habit, pervert the power of
 “ reason more or less:

“ Unnumber’d throngs on ev’ry side are seen,
 “ Of bodies chang’d to various forms by spleen.
 “ Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
 “ One bent; the handle this and that the spout.
 “ A pipkin there, like Homer’s tripod walks;
 “ Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pye talks;
 “ Men prove with child as powerful fancy works,
 “ And maids, turn’d bottles, call aloud for corks.”

This quotation brought to my mind an acquaintance of poor Mrs. Waller’s, an old maiden lady, who conceived herself a sitting hen for a certain number of hours in the day, during which she sat, with unexhausted patience, on a basket of work, with which she had mixed some straw, in the corner of her room. Except when the fit was on her, she was very rational, unless any one mentioned or hinted at the subject of her distemper, on which, away she would fly to her nest, and remain there till her next meal called her off. To this case Mr. Rundle added several that came within his own knowledge, which he told with great humour, supported by ludicrous quotations, convincing me that he was no less agree-

able as a companion than skilful as a medical professor. I found my spirits raised in his company, my disappointment of the day before did not seem to sit so heavy on my heart, and while he talked I forgot every thing like misfortune.

At length, having done my mind as much good by his conversation as my body by his lancet and powders, he got up to go away, advising me to indulge in bed for an hour or two longer, and to be moderate in my food. I begged, however, to intrude upon his time a little longer, telling him how much I had been impressed with the simple account, though unfeelingly given, of the silent tears and patient dissolution of the youth whom he had attended here. "I am sure," said I, "there was something more than common in his character, and perhaps also in his story. His behaviour at such a crisis must have interested such a mind as yours, and I have no doubt your kindness and manners drew some communication from him. If my curiosity is not improper, will you gratify me by telling me what you know of him?"

"That," replied he, "as I told you last night, is very little, yet perhaps you may think that little interesting. I was called in to him about six weeks ago. It seems he arrived here a week or ten days before. Till he was taken ill he was hardly ever in the house. He was observed to spend most of his time at the village of Affington—" "At Affington!" exclaimed I.—"Yes," continued Mr. Rundle, "and chiefly in the church-yard there, where he marked out to the sexton the spot he should like his remains to occupy when he died. In his last hours he expressed the same wish to me, but said at the time that he had no expectation of its being complied with; he engaged me, however, in a solemn promise, that the

“ body of a favourite dove, which he had stuffed and
 “ preserved, should be buried in the coffin with him
 “ lying upon his breast. He became gradually
 “ emaciated, lost his appetite, and refused nourish-
 “ ment. When I found he was dying, I urged him
 “ more than once to say who he was, but he begged
 “ me in the most earnest manner to desist inquiring.
 “ ‘ Yet,’ said he, ‘ if ever you should hear of a girl
 “ whose name is Amy inquiring here for a missing
 “ stranger, tell her that her dove lies in the grave
 “ with *William*.’ He offered me his purse the day
 “ before he died; but as the taking of it would have
 “ been pronouncing immediate sentence upon him;
 “ I postponed it, expressing a hope of a favourable
 “ turn. He expired, however, in the course of the
 “ night, and next day, when his trunk was examined;
 “ it was found to contain but a very small stock of
 “ clothes, and in his purse there were only two gui-
 “ neas and a few shillings. I had, and still have;
 “ suspicions on this head; but I have been restrain-
 “ ed from expressing them, for fear of injuring the
 “ fair character of the people who keep this inn.
 “ Information of the death of a stranger being car-
 “ ried to the coroner, he thought proper to hold an
 “ inquisition. My opinion was, that the youth had
 “ fallen a victim to a mental disorder, and had pined
 “ himself to death, with which the jury were satis-
 “ fied. This may be a useful lesson to you—guard
 “ against the passions—you too are young, beware
 “ especially of love:

————“ With caution and reserve
 “ Indulge the sweet destroyer of repose,
 “ Nor court too much the queen of charming cares.
 “ For while the cherish’d poison in your breast
 “ Ferments and maddens; sick with jealousy,
 “ Absence, distrust, or e’en with anxious joy,
 “ The wholesome appetites and powers of life
 “ Dissolve in languor. The coy stomach loathes

- " The genial board ; your cheerful days are gone ;
- " The generous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is fled.
- " The body wastes away, th' infected mind,
- " Dissolved in female tenderness, forgets
- " Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.
- " And some have died for love ; and some run mad ;
- " And some with desp'rate hands themselves have slain."

This ingenious and agreeable man had a quotation, an aphorism, or a proverb, for every topic. I told him that I did not think I needed the advice of Armstrong on this subject, but that I never heard or read his poem without being charmed. " It is a poem," said he, " that every young person should study and get by heart ; for it can scarcely fail to influence the conduct, and whoever is guided by it stands the fairest chance of possessing a sound mind and a healthy body." I asked him if he thought the stranger had really died for love, or whether some other passion might not have preyed upon his mind. " It could hardly be grief," said he, " at his age ; and the other violent passions that shake the human frame, such as anger and fear, act differently ; besides the doubt is sufficiently resolved by Amy and the dove." I asked where he was buried. " I made a collection," replied Mr. Rundle, " by speaking of him among my acquaintance ; and, embellishing the love-story a little, the young folks subscribed so freely, that I actually had it in my power to lay him in the spot he had marked out. He lies in Affington church-yard, near the lime-tree whose branches spread over his grave." As Mr. Rundle stood while he spoke, I thanked him for his kindness, and said, I would detain him no longer at present. On which he desired me to keep my room all day ; and giving me some direction as to diet, left me, promising to see me in the afternoon.

CHAPTER VII.

Two ways of gaining wisdom—Passions—A short description of Mr. Rundle, who leaves Morland—Lodgings at a cottage—A philosophical cordial—Ben and Bridget—A receipt to make coarse sheets comfortable.

THERE are minds, though perhaps few in proportion to the general number, that apply the lessons life presents to their perusal. To these the facts which they read in the living book, convey the moral they contain; the index of the hidden monitor is turned upon the observer, and salutary uses are extracted: they learn wisdom from the fate of others. They who see in the incidents that compose the tale of life nothing more than the facts are children, who, left to themselves, stop at the end of their fable, and omit the application: these are doomed to gain wisdom by woful experience.

Diffidence, study, habit, perhaps in some degree constitution, classed me early among those who strive to profit by the experience of others. I do not mention this as a proof of virtue or wisdom, for my endeavours were not always successful; and as to the gratification of pride, it would be completely swept away by the sense I have of the impropriety of a boast: but I speak of it to take the opportunity of declaring that I owe to it many escapes from error and from misery, and to induce others to follow an example replete with beneficial consequences. In the outset of life I seldom saw effects of the various passions, without putting myself, in imagination, in the place of the person posset, and coolly counteracting the power that seemed so uncontrollable. The vice that disgusted me in others, I assured myself, must disgust others in me; and every virtue that raised my esteem, or excited my affection, I

marked for imitation. The very foibles, or the mere graces of exterior, I endeavoured to turn to account, and though, as I have said, I often missed my aim, I am; upon the whole, much indebted to this practice for some conquests over myself, for hours of self-approbation, and for a tranquil and easy spirit. It has assisted me in the enjoyment of that sacred impression which was so early made upon my mind, by reflecting on the unconnected state to which I was born.

These thoughts arise on recollection of my sentiments when Mr. Rundle left me, after the conversation respecting the stranger. I remember my eyes were full of tears, I pitied him from my soul, but I learned from an undoubted source, the extreme effects of a passion allowed to be the most delightful. The most delightful ! thought I—What ! when it oppresses the soul to desperation, when tears and bitter sighs are the fruits of it, when it undermines strength and health, when it digs the grave ! No ; it can only be delightful to those who have learned to regulate their emotions. Great God ! if the most pleasing of our passions may be warped so perniciously, so fatally, how carefully should we watch, control, direct the source whence spring these powerful agents of happiness and of misery, the heart of man ! They only can hope for true felicity in this life, who have judgment to guide these impetuous leaders through the difficult passes on the road, and to tame, without destroying, their spirit.

I had another conversation in the afternoon with Mr. Rundle, who became more and more amiable in my eyes. He was a little man, with a countenance that indicated strong intellect. He had a broad forehead, prominent nose, but not aquiline, lively eyes, and an agreeable contour. He was growing

grey without a wrinkle on his forehead, a token of his habitual cheerfulness. He spoke fluently, and his memory, uncommonly retentive, was stored with inexhaustible funds from the most eminent authors, both of antiquity and modern times. He was instructive and entertaining, yet modest and attentive, equally disposed to listen or to speak. Never was a man more suited to his profession, for the medicines his skill administered were seconded by cheerful looks and encouraging remarks. How often have I wished, for the sake of mankind, that every surgeon and apothecary were a Rundle! And how did I lament, at the time I am speaking of, the consciousness that precluded any advance towards the cultivation of a friendship with him.

When I saw him again the following morning, and was told by him that he resigned me to my own direction, I felt a pang; and would gladly have been sick a week longer to have protracted the resignation. Having previously calculated that he had attended me five times, and having taken into the account the bleeding and medicines, I concluded that three guineas would be a proper compensation; instead therefore of asking for a bill, I put them into his hands, saying, I hoped I had made a just estimate. "This is too much," said he, "my charges can hardly amount to so much as a third of it." On this I insisted upon his receiving the sum I had presented. "Well," said he, putting the guineas into his pocket, "be it so; I have no objection to admit that the liberality of the affluent should enable and encourage professional men to attend the indigent gratuitously, and others according to their means." He then bade me take care not to get another fever, and took his leave of me.

How little did he know the state of my affairs, when he talked of affluence! but if I had been ever

so much inclined to open my mind to him, his observation would have silenced me ; and I suffered him to depart without a word tending either to confirm his opinion, or undeceive him. Having, in the short attendance of Mr. Rundle, enjoyed a considerable reciprocity of congenial sentiment, I became more painfully sensible of the void in my heart, when suddenly left again, mentally as well as corporeally, alone. I was soon, however, called upon by the very reflection on my unconnected state, to attend to the object that had brought me into Devonshire. My affairs, it must be allowed, were in a very bad train. By the pride of Sir Nicholas Broke, I was deprived of every hope at Broke-hall ; and by the anger of the vicar of Holcomb, I had missed the blessed prospect that opened but to shut me out from Affington-house. Regret, however, was unavailing, and to murmur was wicked. I endeavoured, with some success, to tranquillize my mind, and set out in quest of a lodging more suited to my circumstances than the inn, at which the Bath coach had set me down.

After an hour's search through different parts of the town, I found that cheapness and pleasantness dwelt not in the same streets of a city, and, having been all my life accustomed to open airy situations, I could not bear the thoughts of a confined one ; resolving therefore to seek a place out of town, it came into my head to walk to the village of Affington and inquire there. At the parting of the road, where to the left I saw the woods that skirted the way to Mr. Jones's, a lively recollection of all that passed the day I was carried to his house took possession of my mind, and I should probably have relapsed into the pangs of regret, had I not, taking the other road, come almost immediately upon the village. The agreeable and rural appearance of it

delighted me, and I was fortunate enough to find what I wanted, upon the first inquiry.

Going towards a cottage covered with a vine, and commanding a beautiful prospect, I saw a grey-headed, venerable, old man, sitting in a rustic porch, basking in the sun. I accosted him with a kind air, and he referred me to his dame, who was within. She was younger and stronger than her husband. She was engaged over the fire, preparing something for their dinner; and a little girl, about ten years old, was spinning on one of those simple wheels, the management of which gives exercise, not to one foot only, but to the whole body. She twirled it with her hand, walked some paces from it, forming the thread, and returned to give the motion of the wheel new force. The old woman, who had a mild and pleasing countenance, desisted from what she was about, to speak to me. She told me of two houses in the village where lodgings were sometimes let; informing me also of the price at which they generally went, which, though lower than at Exeter, did not yet suit my prospects. Observing a small staircase, I asked how many rooms she had up stairs. She desired me to go up and see.

There were three, and a little loft. Every thing I saw was neat and clean; one of the chambers had a press-bed, which shut up in the day-time to leave more room. I resolved to persuade the good woman to let it to me. At first she was reluctant, for it was her grand-daughter's, and she should not like to turn Nancy out of it, for she had slept there ever since her father went away. "Nay do, grannee, let the gentleman have it," said Nancy, as she spun her thread, "he have such a mind to it." This generosity abated my desire, and I said I could not think of taking it from such a good little girl. "Now, do ye Sir," said she; "the little bed next

“to grannee’s be big enough for me, and I be used
“to sleep there before faither went.” On the dear
little girl’s persuading me, the old woman’s reluctance was conquered, and she said she was willing to oblige me, but had no sheets, except what were very coarse, for she had never thought of lodging any body. I made her easy on this head, and, after satisfying myself that the girl had no uncomfortable birth by the exchange, agreed to become an inmate with these old people, paying three shillings and sixpence a week for my room.

On farther talking with them they consented that I should partake of their daily fare, generously leaving it to me to calculate, and give what it was worth. The cheapness of those times and the mode of living considered, the good folks thought me prodigal in settling the payment at the rate of a shilling a day; and I, forced to observe the most rigid frugality, and just come from examining dear and dirty lodgings in the narrow streets and alleys of a great town, thought myself happy in being lodged and supported for half-a-guinea a week, in a neat airy cottage, in a pretty village, with a picturesque country about it. I took possession immediately; and in the afternoon, by means of one of the market carts returning from Exeter, I had my trunk safely conveyed to my humble, but agreeable apartment.

In discharging my bill at the inn, I was shocked at the extravagant charges made in it, and ventured to expostulate with the landlady; but the volubility of her tongue, and the severity of her reproaches for my ingratitude, stunned and silenced, if they did not convince me. Happy to escape from her and the coroner, I gave her the full amount of her demand, and repaired to my rural chamber.

The first thing I did was to examine my expences since I left Reading, and the state of my finances;

which I found sunk to about six and thirty pounds. At this rate my purse would have been soon exhausted, and I congratulated myself on the arrangement I had made, by which I was able to look forward for months, if nothing in my favour turned out sooner. I determined however not to remit my attendance on the vicar of Holcomb, whom I meant, according to the advice I received from his relation, the curate of Reading, to consult on laying out my money to advantage.

Having laid out the few books I had on a deal table which stood in my chamber, and put some paper and pens in the drawer of it, I sat leaning my head on my hand, and insensibly fell into a retrospect of my adventures on the day I left Holcomb with the letter for Mr. Jones; and I was beginning to relapse into despondency, when casting my eye on my Seneca, I took it up, and opening the leaves accidentally, fell upon the following passage: "What
" was Regulus the worse, that fortune made choice
" of him for an eminent instance both of faith and pa-
" tience? He was thrown into a wooden case stuck
" with pointed nails, so that which way soever his
" body turned, it rested upon his wounds; his eye-
" lids were cut off to keep him waking; and yet
" Mæcenæ was not happier on his bed, than Regu-
" lus on his spikes. *It has pleased God*, said he,
" *to single me out for an experiment of the force of*
" *human nature.* No man knows his own strength
" or value, but by being put to the proof. The pi-
" lot is tried in a storm; the soldier in a battle; the
" rich man knows not how to behave himself in po-
" verty: he that has lived with popularity and ap-
" plause knows not how he would bear infamy and
" reproach, nor he that has never had children, how
" he would bear the loss of them. Calamity is the
" occasion of virtue, and a spur to a great mind.

“ The very apprehension of a wound startles a man
“ when he first bears arms ; but an old soldier
“ bleeds boldly, because he knows that a man may
“ lose blood, yet win the day. Nay, many a calamity
“ turns to our advantage ; and great ruin has
“ made way to great glory. One man’s life is saved
“ by a disease ; another is arrested and taken out of
“ the way a little before his house falls in and must
“ have crushed him.”

Philosophers and divines have been well called the physicians of the soul. Let the unhappy apply to their writings for relief and comfort : there is scarcely a mental ailment for which they will not find a medicine calculated to remove or allay the malady, and, if mingled with friendship, sovereign and infallible. I ceased pondering on my ill-fortune, and went down to talk with my host and hostess.

The sun had not yet set, but Nancy was laying a clean cloth on the table for supper, and Bridget, her grandmother, was washing some radishes. The old man was sitting at the cottage window, reading the Bible. He had experienced no failure of sight, though so far advanced in years. His placid countenance was a picture of internal peace, and his grey hairs pointed the way to heaven. Ben Collins was his name. The manners of Ben and Bridget were as simple as their fare, for they had never travelled far from home, and our talk was equally simple, relating to country affairs. Bridget put the radishes on the table, then brought half a cheese of a plain kind, and a brown loaf, while Nancy drew a jug of beer.

I eat my supper with a relish I had not known since I heard of Mrs. Waller’s death ; and I may add, that I slept better too that night, for though, on my first approaching my bed, I was startled at the coarseness of the sheets, I consoled myself with their cleanness, for I had been again consulting my

philosopher-physician, and had received this prescription ; “ It is necessary to provide against hunger, thirst, or cold ; and somewhat for a covering to shelter us against other inconveniencies, but it matters not a pin whether it be of turf or marble. A man may lie as warm and as dry under a thatched, as under a gilded roof. Let the mind be great and glorious, and all other things are despicable in comparison.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Experience wonders at nothing—Morland recommended to a situation by the vicar—Cottage fare—Ben’s physic—A solitary ramble—The Linden—William’s grave.

THE day after I took possession of my rural apartment I went to Holcomb, to inform Mr. Whitaker of the result of my application to Mr. Jones. Approaching the vicarage on an elevated foot-path concealed by wild shrubs, I had got within fifty paces of the gate, when I observed a gentleman on horseback with his hand in the vicar’s. I stopped to avoid going upon them abruptly. They talked a few minutes in that position, then shook hands heartily and parted ; the vicar going in, and his friend, followed by a servant, passing me in his way to Exeter.

The vicarage gate was opened to me by my young acquaintance, who had given me the friendly hint respecting his master’s character. Instead of letting me in, he drew me out into the middle of the road, and pointing to the horsemen now almost out of sight, said, “ Did you see ’un pass by ? who do ye take ’un to be ? ” I replied that I had no

idea. "It be Sir Nicholas Broke himself;" said the boy laughing. "What!" cried I, "are he and your master friends?" "Yes, zure," said he, "he ha' been zitting here all the morning with 'un in main good humour."

I had not yet learned to suppress astonishment, though I had often been told by the curate of Reading, as well as by Horace, not to wonder at any thing, and, *I wonder at nothing*, was a common saying of poor Mrs. Waller's. I own I was greatly surprised at this sudden renewal of regard, and could not help wondering how a man could one day execrate and abuse, and the next receive and embrace the same person. My surprise, however, was that of a novice; meeting it afterwards not unfrequently in life, I ceased to wonder.

The vicar received me with complacency. In telling him my disappointment I omitted the effect it had produced on me, and mentioned the whole circumstance lightly, for fear of burdening his mind with the recollection that his passion uncontrolled had been the means of my losing so eligible a situation: how astonished was I then to hear him say, he was glad of it! "I have a much better place for you," said he; "why, sure, Morland, I gave you a hint of it the other day. Didn't I say something about Lady Broke's being dissatisfied with her man?" I bowed. "I know I did," continued he, "it was a matter of uncertainty, however, whether she would part with him or not; but I can now tell you, that it is not only certain that he is to go, but that you are to be his successor." "You surprise me, indeed, Sir," said I; "has Lady Broke approved of me?"—"Approved of you!" repeated he, "how can she have approved of you without seeing you? But when I recommend there's no fear of disapprobation."

“ You have seen her Ladyship, Sir ? ” said I. “ No, Sir, I have not seen her Ladyship,” replied he, sharply, “ but if you will give me leave to speak, I’ll tell you.”

Looking Mr. Whitaker in the face, I saw that his brow portended a brisk gale, if not a storm ; but fortunately the good humour of the morning prevailed, and with a returning smile, he went on. “ My friend Sir Nicholas has been with me all the morning. Broke’s an odd man, but he has good points. He did not mean to offend me the other day ; and had he explained himself properly in his letter, that the Duke of M., as was really the case, had very particular business with him, as was really the case, why I should have seen that I should have been in the way, which would have really been the case, and I should certainly rather not, and of course should have taken the matter kindly : but it is not every Baronet that holds the pen of a Junius. Sir Nicholas has good points, but he can’t write more than three lines at a time ; and one should make allowances for a friend. He has been with me, as I told you, all this morning ; and, after a deal of pleasant talk, it came out among other things that my Lady’s man was absolutely going away, and so I secured the place for you. Broke has promised to speak to her Ladyship : I shall myself ride over to Broke-hall, in the afternoon, and I wish you to go there to-morrow, about this time, and show yourself to Lady Broke. You will do very well, I am sure, Morland ; but remember, keep your secret, and be less of the gentleman in your carriage.” Though less sanguine than at first in my expectations from the vicar’s influence, I thanked him for his goodness, and, promising to go to Broke-hall the next day, took my leave.

I had just time to walk to my cottage before

Bridget's dinner hour. Little Nancy was looking out, and ran forward to meet me. She welcomed me with a smile and a curtesy, and said the bacon and greens were quite ready to be put smoking hot on the table. A tranquil cheerfulness reigned at the cottage. Cleanliness was apparent in every thing. A sanded floor, shining pots, glazed earthen cups, a daily clock with a walnut case, a deal table and straw-bottomed chairs, bacon and greens, had at this time more charms for me, than all the luxury I might have anticipated at Broke-hall. My walk had given me an appetite, and I now relished my dinner as much as I had relished my supper the night before.

The cloth being removed, the table put under the window, the end of it reaching Ben Collins's high-backed chair, and Ben himself seated in it, Bridget said, "I maun bring my maister his physic."—"He must not take physic directly after his dinner," said I. "Zure he maun," replied Bridget, "it do him a mort of good; he takes some every day." She then brought him a glass, and stepping up stairs, returned with a small bottle holding about half a pint, to the cork of which she applied a corkscrew she had taken out of her pocket, and drew it with a dexterity that bespoke habit. I immediately suspected it to be one of those panacean cordials that promise to cure all ills; and which generally in the course of a little time perform their promise, by sending their dupes to the little room where all distempers end; and yet its effect on Ben Collins did not at all support my suspicion: he had the health of age, that is, ease, with the gentle continuance of all the natural functions, and this cordial was clearly performing its promise as to longevity.

I had ever been decidedly an unbeliever in the virtues that were unlimited in their boasts; but I

was so fully convinced, by Ben's looks, of the efficacy of his medicine, that I determined to ask him some questions about it, in order to recommend it to others, as well as to use it myself whenever it should be my fate to stand in need of it. To my question as to its operation Ben said, it comforted him all over. "But," said I, "my good old man, I have always understood that these kind of cordials gradually lose their power; are not you obliged, after a certain time, to increase your dose?"—"No, Master," replied Ben, "I ha' never added a drop to it sin first I began to take it, now five years past last Christmas. The doctor that advised it to me, told me I must never take more than the same quantity, or else it would be all one as poison."—"How came you to think of taking it at first?" said I. "You maun know," replied he, "that I never flinched from work for a long number of years. I stood toughly to it, with good wholesome fare and brown beer; but Time laid his hand upon me; he shook my sinews, and he bleached my hairs. I was ashamed however to lie by, and I pushed my strength beyond its natural stretch: so I fell ill, and was weakly for some time. I used to feel a faintness come over me, and I turned tired, as it were, of life, till God raised me a friend to advise me to take this good stuff; and ever sin I feel cheerly, and like to sit in the sun, and to talk to a neighbour, and to hear Nancy sing as she turns her wheel. Verily it be mother's milk to an old man like me."—"You give it such a character," said I, "that I should like to know what it is, and where to get it."—"Pray you taste on't," said Bridget, pouring the liquor into a clean glass, which Nancy brought, laughing as she gave it. I held it up to the light. It was clear and transparent; a perfect ruby liquified.

Before I put it to my lips I asked who was the discoverer of so precious a specific. "That's more than I can tell," replied Ben; "they say the person that invented it is dead, and that it is sent from foreign parts."—"It must be very dear," said I, still eyeing the beautiful colour of the cordial. "I can't say," answered Ben. "Who recommended it?"—"One Mr. Jones."—"Jones!" cried I, and sipped the liquor. I took a second sip; I drank half the glass. "Why, my good fellow," exclaimed I, "if ever I drank water—this is fine old Port."—"An' if it ban't," said Ben, laughing, "it tastes mighty like un."

I was highly pleased with the old man's jest, and with the true history of his cordial, as it flashed upon my mind, when I united the taste of the wine with the name of Jones. Of all the pleasures life affords is there any more grateful to the heart than that which it feels on the contemplation of a benevolent action? It is a picture of the Deity, and without benevolence, "Man," says Bacon, "is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin." Ben Collins had been a labourer all his life on the estate belonging to the Joneses. He had acted his part in the sphere of life in which Providence had placed him, like a man. He had been faithful to his employers, just in his dealings, and kind to his fellow-labourers. He had been very active in saving the lives of some people who had been wrecked on the coast, when he first went down to get a sight of the sea, which had given him a title to more than common affection, and this he had retained through life. The cottage in which he lived belonged to Mr. Jones, and he had enjoyed it rent free for many years. His loss of strength, to which he alluded, being the result of forced exertion, as well as natural decay, his life

would have been the sacrifice, had not Mr. Jones employed a doctor for him, who advised the use of wine instead of physic. It acted, as he said, like mother's milk, it set him upon his feet. That accomplished, mothers wean their infants, but the provider of Ben's milk knew that age required to be kept as well as put upon its feet, and he resolved not to wean him, till the removing angel summoned him to the enjoyment of everlasting youth. A monthly provision of half-pint bottles, packed in a box, had been regularly sent to the cottage. There were two boxes, marked *Ben's physic*, used for the supply. On the first day of every month this physic was brought from Affington-house, and was deposited in the place whence the box with the empty bottles were removed. Ben's dose was half a pint daily; he made four glasses of it, and, finding in three a sufficient infusion of comfort, he bestowed the fourth upon Bridget.

The discovery of the nature of Ben's physic led to some talk respecting his physician, and every thing the grateful old couple said of Mr. Jones not only served to increase my veneration for his character, but renewed my sorrow for the disappointment I had experienced. I listened for some time with mixed delight and anguish to the account they gave me of the whole family. Ben lengthened the interval between his glasses, and often pressed me to divide his dose, till I insisted upon his not urging it, as I could have no pleasure in accepting the invitation. When he found me determined he gave up the attempt: this day he lost one glass for his joke, as Bridget still had her fourth, but in future the cordial was administered with its usual precision. Having taken his last sup, and added "God bless un!" which he invariably did, on finishing his daily portion, in gratitude to his be-

nefactor, he reclined back in his easy chair, disposed for his customary nap, which I left him to enjoy.

As yet a stranger to the country about me, I was tempted by the mildness of the weather to stroll round it. The bloom of the hawthorn that whitened all the hedges, the verdure of the young crops of grass and corn that spread in every direction, the life that agitated the various fields, where lambs, or calves, or foals, were putting forth their early powers to catch the novelty of existence; the river, widening in its course between banks picturesque and rich, with vessels under sail gliding on its surface, were objects well suited to gratify and to tranquillize the mind; but mine longed for a blessing without which all material objects decrease in value. What is pleasure without participation!

I rambled the whole afternoon, sometimes sitting on a bank to enjoy the prospect before me, sometimes wandering on, full of thought, and insensible of the impressions on my sight. I had walked a considerable way, and my steps were turned up the river, when my reverie was broken by an abrupt perception of Affington-house just before me. It had been in my view near a mile before I observed it, for the inhabitants had taken possession of my ideas so completely, that my eyes ceased to perform their office. I stopped and gazed with rapture on the abode of goodness and of happiness, till running my eye over the lawn, I plainly perceived young Jones and his sister. Though I distinguished them, it was not probable that they distinguished me; for I had not occupied their thoughts, as they had done mine: yet I felt uneasy lest I should appear loitering about the house. I struck into a field that brought me to the road, on entering which I saw a lane that I suspected to be a

short cut to the village ; nor was I mistaken ; I came out upon a green about a quarter of a mile from Afington.

The first object that caught my eye was the church, and it brought to my mind the young stranger who died at the inn whence I had escaped. I went forward to visit the spot where he lay. Several trees grew in the church-yard near each other, but the solitary linden stood in a remote corner. The linden, or lime, is seldom found standing alone ; it is planted in parks, and to form avenues, for the social and beautiful intertwining of its branches, which, it has been said, gave the first idea of those Gothic structures that are the pride of former days, and the admiration of the present. The solitude of this must have been accidental ; not indeed thrown into the earth at random, but transplanted, like me, by some person thoughtless of its future fate, unconscious of its social nature. “ What ! ” said I, as I approached it : “ Quite alone ! Where are thy “ brothers and sisters ? thy parents ? thine uncles “ and aunts ? thy numerous cousins ? where the “ whole generation of thy kin, that should be fold- “ ing thee in their embraces, or blowing kisses with “ their waving fingers ? Alas ! thou never knewest “ these delights : yet dost thou flourish, and art “ among the foremost to enliven the young spring “ with the gay verdure of thy broad foliage ; yet “ dost thou elaborate thy perfume, to fling its odour “ to the senseless dead, and cast thy beaded florals “ on their graves. Well, solitary linden ! thou “ givest me an excellent lesson : heedless of thy “ position, thou cheerfully performest the task which “ nature set thee. And shall I, blessed with the “ power of looking beyond nature up to nature’s “ God, shall I repine at my condition, and shrink “ from the task which he assigns me ! No, solitary

“linden! if ever a murmur tremble on my lip, I’ll
“think of thee, and act my part.”

It was a beautiful linden. Having stood admiring it for some time, I advanced to the spot I came to see. The turf was rounded over the grave in the common way, terminated by stones, a large one to mark the head, a small one the feet of the inhabitant. On the larger one was engraved the single name of WILLIAM, to which was added the date of his death. The loneliness of the grave, for it stood at a considerable distance from all the others, the recollection of my distempered fancy in the room where he died, his patience, his silent weeping, and lowly resignation, with the thought of what Amy was yet doomed to feel, forced from me a tribute of tears to his misfortunes. As I left the grave, I again read his name, and involuntarily added, “*Be-ware of love.*”

CHAPTER IX.

Morland goes to Broke-hall.

I DID not fail to make my appearance next morning at Broke-hall, a magnificent seat, part of which was a very ancient structure called the *castle*, and part an elegant modern building lately added to it, in compliance with the taste of Lady Broke, from which the whole had received the appellation of *hall*: the manor was intitled Brokeland.

From Holcomb the road gradually became steeper. Entering at the porter’s lodge I had to walk about half a mile before I reached the house, into which, after waiting five minutes from the time I rang at the door, I was admitted by a very tall man in a hand-

some livery. On hearing my business he stared at me from head to foot, and asked me if I had lately come out of a family in which there had been a death, observing that the cloth of which my coat was made was superfine. I told him the truth, and begged to know if I could see Lady Broke: on which he said—"Will you go into the kitchen, or wait here?" I preferred the latter, and he left me.

The hall in which I stood was spacious and lofty, and contained a broad winding staircase that terminated on the first floor. The pannels of the walls were decorated with paintings in *fresco*, and from the centre hung a grand gilt lantern of crown glass, suspended by a brass chain. I remained full half an hour at liberty to walk from side to side; a dead silence reigned: neither man, woman, nor child, dog, nor cat disturbed the stillness of the scene, and I began to think myself forgotten, when the light echo of a distant foot announced the approach of a living creature.

It drew nearer and nearer; but still the tread was gentle. It proceeded from a long passage, to the left, beyond a colonnade that terminated the hall, which I had not explored, my attention having been fixed on the pictures. At last a delicate little female figure, with a gipsy-hat and short petticoats, looking like a sylph, appeared among the columns, and calling to me, said, "Sir! this way. I am come to show you to my Lady." She waited till I was near her, gazing at me all the time with her head on one side, then said with a smile; "You have not been waiting long, I hope." I thanked her, and accompanied her back through the passage, which after a considerable way turned an angle, and continued about half as far as the former part, when it brought us into a lively room fitted up with compli-

cated taste. There were delicate glass bookcases of satin wood, filled with superbly bound books ; stages of flowering exotics, with the colours duly mingled and adjusted to produce the most grateful effect upon the eye ; canary birds, Virginia nightingales, and Indian avadavats, in silver-wired cages, hung on large myrtles placed on gilt tripods ; gold and silver fish in immense glass globes, on similar stands, alternate with the cages ; Indian bows and arrows ; and a table for *trou-madame*. Vine leaves and tendrils curled around the windows, which were also provided with Venetian blinds to regulate the degree of light according to the inclination of the moment. A large glass-door to the left discovered an extensive aviary, where a great variety of birds, foreign and native, were collected within the same range of wire.

“ That’s my Lady,” said the slender-ankled damsel, pointing to a lady among the birds, whose person was the reverse of her own : “ she is watching a sitting bullfinch, for she breeds them all herself, from first to last. I’ll let her know you are here.”

My conductress opening the glass-door, proceeded into the aviary, and I drew back out of sight. She soon returned and beckoned me ; I followed her, and passing through a city of nests inhabited by beings from every quarter of the globe, more heterogeneous than are to be found in London, Paris, or Constantinople, we ascended two marble steps into a room which on every side, from top to bottom, was completely covered with an infinite variety of china, arranged on shelves in different services. The farther end of the room seemed to be without a door ; the vacant space for which was lofty, and admitted the view of a rock so near as to cast a considerable shade on the room, while from its summit a gentle cataract, whitening some abrupt points in its way down, poured over with a constant murmur, and, dashing upon

some stones at the bottom, ran off into a glade. Near the open space, left vacant by a sliding door, sat Lady Broke at a table, looking at some papers, which, after bidding me advance, she continued to examine, as if on purpose to allow me time to view her cascade.

Her Ladyship was in the maturity of beauty. She had been married some four-and-twenty years. Her skin was smooth, and her features delicate, but time had gradually augmented the covering of her bones, and the rotundity of some parts of her person had shot from the curve of the beautiful into the projections of the sublime. It had been necessary in the course of the last seven years to widen the elbows of her arm-chairs, an improvement, which, to prevent invidious reflections, had been several times generalized in the change of those pieces of necessary furniture, till refusing more than one arm at once to a single person, and usurping the office of sociables, all were again narrowed, except her Ladyship's, which very evidently asserted their superior dignity among their fellows. Her height was of the middle size, and her carriage commanding, but affectedly condescending. She seemed rather desirous that one should discover her gracious intention of putting one at one's ease, than solicitous whether the effect were produced or not, just as she wore a smile more from the idea of its heightening the charms of her own face than as an indication of pleasure received from others.

After a silence of a few minutes she looked complacently at me, and said: "I understand, Sir, you are the person of whom Mr. Whitaker speaks so favourably?" My sensations at this moment were truly painful, for, in spite of her Ladyship's complacent air, I felt myself in a situation, at which, notwithstanding all my philosophical resolutions, my

soul revolted, whenever it was for a moment off its guard. I only bowed, but I fancy I had forgotten the vicar's caution, and again suffered my bow to betray me, for Lady Broke smiling, asked me if I had ever worn a livery. My blood flew into my face; I stammered, and disdaining a falsehood, owned I never had. "Well," said her Ladyship, "there's no harm in that. I see you are very young, and of course the more pliant. If your temper is good, I have no doubt, from your appearance, I shall be able to make something of you. Can you read?" I was not a little surprised at this question, which of course I answered in the affirmative. "And can you get by heart?" added her Ladyship. This question appeared to me still more divergent than the other. I looked at the lady, and was silent. "That would be expecting too much," continued she, "yet on trial you might not find it hard to learn." Puzzled to conceive what she aimed at, I assured her I by no means found it difficult, and that my memory was abundantly stored with the productions of the poets. "Oho!" said she, "I find Mr. Whitaker's commendation not at all exaggerated. Can you repeat *The Water-Lark*?" What all this had to do with a man who came to be hired as a servant, was beyond my range of comprehension: yielding, however, to her Ladyship's fancy, I answered, I did not know it. "Not know the *Water-Lark*!" exclaimed she, "though, now I think of it, I believe it is not yet published. Do you know any other of Dalby's productions." I said the name of Dalby was renowned for a very celebrated composition, but except for that I had never heard him spoken of. "Perhaps not," said she, "you have had other things to attend to, but some of his compositions are infinitely better than that you

“allude to. He is a young man of great merit, on which account I encourage his visits here. But repeat me something that I may form an estimate of your talents, for I tell you fairly I have a point in view, and I shall be glad to find you capable of what I wish.”

I now began to think that my promotion depended upon my elocution in recitation, and in obedience to her Ladyship's command, I repeated Collins's Ode on the Passions. When I finished she said it was very pretty, but that she believed it was one of Mr. Dalby's; and she was sure it was so like, at all events, that if it was not his it must have been taken from his. She then told me that I repeated very prettily, and much better than she expected; but that I was not sufficiently animated. “How-ever,” said she, “allowance must be made for the first time. I dare say you have been brought up on the foundation of one of the public schools. Can you dance?” At this question I blushed; but I knew not why, for I had been considered as the best dancer at Reading. I bowed, and said I had been taught. “I see you will do,” said her Ladyship, “and I desire you will leave word where you may be found at a minute's warning. The man whom I am going to discharge is a faithful, honest creature, and a very good servant, but not fit for my establishment; he can't repeat, and my nymphs don't like him. I shall let him go with credit, and give him the best of characters; he has yet near a month to stay, but I engage you from this day; go with Flora, who will give you some refreshment; inform her where you live, and she will talk to you of your salary, and all particulars. Flora, take care of this young man.” She then gently inclined her head to my bow, and

the airy sylph who had conducted me to her Ladyship, making a slight and graceful curtesy, led the way.

CHAPTER X.

Taste—Truth sometimes no virtue—A dairy, where Morland gets farther acquainted with the character of the Broke family—He has a return of some qualms of pride—A tetchy spirit—Advice—The most venomous creature in nature—Happy presages.

UNDER Flora's convoy I passed through the door at which Lady Broke was sitting. As we proceeded I turned to look at the cascade that completed the beauty of her Ladyship's china-room. The artifice was too visible to please: Nature had placed the rock, but Sir Nicholas's money had forced the water over it, and in a very scanty stream! No hill towered behind it to assure the imagination of an elevated source, while an arcade at a little distance betrayed the aqueduct, and proved the water-fall to be a contrivance of the same taste that could complicate literature and satin-wood, flowers, birds in silver-wired cages, and fish in glass globes; that could breed birds from first to last, and praise Collins's ode for being stolen from a friend's.

"How do you like it, Sir?" said Flora.

The question was a test of my sincerity. How difficult is it to a sensible mind to speak truth where it is disagreeable! That which is so delightful among those who know and love it, is a species of brutality where it is misconceived; and where no injury is done to religion or virtue, there is perhaps no harm in softening truth to the expectations of an innocent self-love. Some have no right to the truth from us,

and to some we have no right to give it. To withhold it where due, is base ; but to dismay others with it, when unimportant, is no virtue.

“ Don’t *you* think it pretty ?” said I. Flora rapturously avowed her admiration. “ Come then,” cried I, “ and give me a bowl of milk, my little Flora, for my walk has made me thirsty.”—“ Oh, if you love milk,” she replied, “ you shall have plenty. Stay here for me, till I get the key of the dairy, I’ll be back in a moment.” Indeed I had hardly time to cast my eye over the irregular mass presented by the garden front of the castle and hall before she returned, bringing a little basket in her hand.

She conducted me by the side of the narrow stream through the glade, which was rendered beautiful by the velvet appearance of the turf and the shrubs planted on the acclivities. We had not walked many minutes when suddenly turning to the right, a range of rich pastures broke upon the view. The fields were divided by hedges of thorn, and afforded their summer fare to the cows and horses attached to Broke-hall. A door opened from the garden into the first field where the milch cows grazed close to the dairy, which Flora now unlocked. It was a grotto, consisting of three chambers cut in a small hill, the curve of which allowed for the admission of light on three sides. The middle chamber was spacious, and furnished with dairy china, and earthen-ware, a round marble table, and mahogany chairs. On each side were marble fountains, and the pavement was of black and white marble in lozenges. Hither the family and their friends often repaired in warm weather to enjoy, in the cool of the grotto, luxurious repasts of fruits, and sweetmeats ate with cream, and the milk from the cow curdled by wine into syllabub. The other

chambers were stored with large pans of milk fully creamed, or newly set to cream, and with bowls of fresh-made butter. In one of the chambers were stoves containing a slow fire, over which some pans of the milk, where the cream was completely risen, were set. The heat, thus gradually communicated, and never suffered to produce ebullition, coagulates the rich covering. Every pan is removed from the stove as it begins to simmer, and ranged on stands and shelves to cool: the cream is then taken off from the flit or impoverished milk, and forms the *clotted cream* so general in Devonshire, and so delicious with coffee, with sweet-meats, and pastry.

In this delightful dairy Flora regaled me with some delicate biscuits, which she produced from her basket, and I pledged her in a bowl of the finest milk I ever drank. After thanking her for her attention, I was desirous of gaining some further information respecting the character of Lady Broke; and I accordingly entered into conversation with her. “Your lady,” said I, “seems to be a woman of a peculiar turn of mind.”—“Yes,” replied Flora, “she is very notorious for her taste.”—“How long have you lived with her?”—“As long, almost, as I can remember. Her Ladyship had me brought up herself, and gave me an education fit for the place I have.”—“Her maid?”—“No, you vulgar creature you! one of her attendants. There are three of us whose business it is to attend entirely upon her Ladyship, to dress her, read to her, and always be within her call. Mr. Dalby calls us the three graces, but my Lady gives us different names.”—“Mr. Dalby, I suppose, is a very intimate friend of the family’s?”—“Of my Lady’s most. Sir Nicholas and Mr. Broke don’t half like him. He is a sweet man, and a pretty poet; my Lady says he is the prettiest poet in all the world.

“ By the way, Sir, you repeated those verses very
“ prettily: I saw my Lady took an immediate liking
“ to you. Pray where did you learn to read? I
“ learned at Exeter, but I could not read till the
“ year my Lady took me to town, and had me taught
“ by a clergyman, under her own direction, for you
“ know there’s a great deal of difference in reading.
“ Some read with a drawl, some can’t pronounce,
“ and hardly any know any thing about emphasis and
“ emotion. What a difference it makes, you know,
“ to read with emotion and without—doesn’t it?
“ As for my part, I really think Mr. Dalby flatters
“ when he says I read with such just emotion. I
“ should like to have your opinion, Sir. Emotion,
“ you know, is the life of every thing—of speaking,
“ of music, of dancing, isn’t it? My Lady is lately
“ grown a little lusty, but you can’t conceive what
“ fine emotions she has notwithstanding.”

Flora proceeded for a considerable time in the praises of her lady, without taking breath, or giving me an opportunity of answering the questions she interspersed in her speech; in the course of which, by patient attention, I learned some facts relative to the Broke family, and drew some conclusions which were afterwards confirmed by experience. Lady Broke had been long vain of her person with undoubted pretensions, and was now vain of her intellect, and the refinement of her feelings, without any pretensions. Sir Nicholas was a man of a gloomy disposition, but extremely solicitous to overcome, or at least to conceal it; and for this purpose he embraced any means that offered. He resorted chiefly to hunting and the bottle, because he found them most successful; but any company, and even the whimsical entertainments of his wife, were cordials, compared with the gloomy state into which he fell when he was not excited by some species of dissipa-

tion. Lady Broke possessed a very great ascendancy over him, and he allowed her to spend immense sums of money in the gratification of her fancied taste.

They had had many children, but had reared only two, their first-born, a boy, who was christened Nicholas after his father, and a daughter, several years younger than her brother. Young Broke, sent to a public school while yet a child, had been early initiated into vice, which, at the age of three-and-twenty, had made such inroads on his constitution, that his person already bore evident marks of debility. He was impious in his conversation, and devoid of principle in his conduct. Miss Broke had received a boarding-school education, and was accordingly an accomplished young lady; that is to say, she played rapidly and noisily on the piano-forte, out of tune, and out of time, and danced with more elegance than modesty. Her brother's company and conversation had had their due effect upon her mind; and if I did not discover from Flora that she was a libertine at sixteen, I found that she was an infidel, and the distance between the two characters is but a step.

With respect to domestic arrangements, Sir Nicholas and Lady Broke had two distinct establishments, and her Ladyship's attendants looked down upon the Baronet's people as of a lower order: these were the servants of Broke-hall, those, as Flora distinguished, were attendants, never employed in menial offices, but in affairs of taste and refinement.

Flora, before she had exhausted her topics, recollected that she might be wanted: she then told me that my appointment was to be twenty guineas a-year, or forty if I found myself the common clothes; and having written my direction in her tablets, conducted me round the castle, put me in the way I had come, and kissing her hand, bade me good day with a smile.

In my way through the grounds I stopped, more than once, to admire the old building, and the richness and beauty of its site. An extended eminence afforded many beautiful points of view, and the porter's lodge, which was out of sight of the castle, stood on a brow that commanded the city of Exeter. The whole had the appearance of one of those fortresses of former ages, in which the barons of England prided themselves upon their independent spirit, now softened by the genius of peace into an elegant retirement. It was a situation fit for a prince of a mind that casts more lustre on his birth than it receives from it. I felt an uncommon veneration for the place, and lingered at the gate, surveying the boldness, the sublimity of the landscapes, formed by the adjacent hills and woods.

On the road to Holcomb my thoughts turned on my conversation with Flora. At what straws will pride catch to break its fall! Lady Broke had talked of my *salary*, Flora of my *appointment* and *common clothes*—not a word of *wages* or *livery*: perhaps I was not descending altogether to the level of a footman.

In spite of this consolatory thought, I could not help regretting, now my fate was fixed, that I had not determined to change my name, when I was compelled to consent to a degradation, in which it was involved with its possessor. I was sorry that I had suffered Flora to write it down in her book; I was on the way to the vicar of Holcomb's, and would have entreated him to wink at my taking another. I might have separated servitude and the name of Morland, notwithstanding the letter he had written in my favour to Mr. Jones; for it did not appear that he had mentioned my name to Lady Broke, and if he had to Sir Nicholas, the Baronet would have

forgotten it. Alas! it was now too late; in the simplicity of my heart I had committed it to Flora: the name of Morland was imprinted on her memory, or at least on her tablet, a more certain remembrancer. The name of Morland! oh, pride! and whom was the substituted name to conceal? who was the far-famed being whose fall the appellation of *Harris* would veil, and that of *Morland* betray? What prince, what hero, or what poet would be surprised at the degradation of Morland? What relation, what gay companion of affluent hours was there to sneer at the degradation of Morland? Was not Morland already an assumed name? Off, off, cried I, off imaginary trappings! a name can neither honour nor dishonour me; and, though, on the other hand, man may do honour to a name, the honest consequences of necessity can never disgrace it. I recovered my common sense before I arrived at Mr. Whitaker's vicarage.

The vicar was at home, and anxious, if not waiting, for the account I had to give. As he encouraged me to be free, I was not reserved in my communication, and he seemed highly pleased with my narrative. He smiled throughout, but when I came to my recitation of the ode, he could not help laughing aloud. "Well, Morland," said he, "I give you joy. It is no fault of yours if good fortune sometimes springs from folly: it will be wisdom in you to accommodate yourself to that folly. Lady Broke's whims will save you the mortification of wearing a livery; and if you are prudent, you may lead an easy life till something better turns up for you. I saw her Ladyship yesterday, and found her brain busy on a *fête-champêtre*, which she means to give some time next month, in honour of her daughter's birth-day. Besides uncommon decorations, there are to be songs and dances in the

“ open air, reels and recitations, music and masks :
“ all the people at the castle are to be made use of,
“ in some shape or other. I took the opportunity
“ of speaking highly of your talents, and humouring
“ her foible ; I informed her that your education, by
“ some means or other, had been far superior to
“ your station in life, that you had never yet worn
“ a livery, and I added that it was a pity you ever
“ should. Charmed with the account which I gave
“ of you, she declared that you should never wear
“ one in her service ; that you were the very person
“ she had been in search of all her life, but had never
“ found ; and that if you answered the description I
“ gave, you should have nothing to complain of.”

I thanked the vicar warmly for his commendation, but added, that I feared my situation would require both a gaiety of heart, and a degree of hypocrisy which my disposition was ill calculated to sustain. “ That’s your look-out, not mine ;” said Mr. Whitaker, assuming a serious countenance ; “ it does not become me to preach hypocrisy.”

I certainly was off my guard in the observation I made, which might convey an implication that he approved what I thought dishonest ! yet nothing was farther from my meaning than to make such a reflection on the vicar, at a moment when he was testifying his goodwill towards me ; but the simplicity of my character often exposed my remarks to an equivocal turn, which tetchiness might lay hold of. Unfortunately my patron was of a tetchy spirit, and he was not pleased that the worldly prudence he had recommended should have raised the idea of hypocrisy. I saw my error, and wished to repair it ; yet I feared falling from blunder to blunder, as is too often the case when one is most anxious to avoid it. I was however more fortunate than I expected.

“ I express myself ill I fear, Sir,” said I ; “ I al-

“ lude to the heaviness of my heart, that does not
 “ allow me to dissemble my feelings sufficiently to
 “ enter into the spirit of the part I have to play.”—
 “ Hang your heaviness of heart and your feelings
 “ too!” said the vicar with a smile, and in perfect
 good humour: “ you are in a world through which
 “ you have to make your way; and, take my word
 “ for it, you will stick in a slough, or fall into a pit,
 “ if you go out of the usual road. You are to take
 “ people as you find them, and make what you can of
 “ their peculiarities without offending. Be assured
 “ it will not fall to your lot to reform any of the fol-
 “ lies of mankind, and your business is to beware
 “ how you make any of them your enemies, particu-
 “ larly women. An exasperated woman is the most
 “ venomous animal on the face of the earth; her
 “ venom is not confined to place; it spreads to every
 “ quarter of the globe; it will reach you at the an-
 “ tipodes; if you die, it will poison your grave.
 “ Morland, you are young, beware of the resentment
 “ of women.”—“ This invective against the sex is
 “ not, I hope, Sir, dictated by personal experience.”
 —“ Not exactly,” replied the vicar, “ but by an ex-
 “ perience equally convincing. I have witnessed the
 “ damnable consequences of insinuations and confi-
 “ dential communications, those impalpable essences
 “ of calumny, more subtile, more infamous, and more
 “ pernicious than the quintessences of *Exili* and *La*
 “ *Vigoureux* *. Yes, I could tell you a tale of a

* I have been charged by a friend with introducing into no-
 vels topics and allusions that seem out of place in such light
 works. My answer is, first, that I consider a novel as a vehicle
 of instruction, as well as of amusement; secondly, that I trust
 many of my readers prefer the works of truth to the works of
 imagination, and are consequently not unacquainted with facts
 in history and other branches of knowledge; thirdly, that by ex-
 citing curiosity I may lead the young and unlearned to better

“woman, Morland—but this is not the time, and
 “I have business—good day to you. I am glad
 “that I have been able to render you any ser-
 “vice—I shall occasionally see you—mind your
 “*ps* and *qs*, and you may yet obtain greater prefer-
 “ment than you could have hoped through Mrs.
 “Waller.”—I smiled and bowed. “I am very seri-
 “ous,” added he, “and I’ll tell you what, my boy;
 “you shall not lack preferment for want of my as-
 “sistance on the occasion. The Brokes have inte-
 “rest with the Bishop, besides livings of which the
 “Baronet is Patron. I say, once more, mind your
 “*ps* and *qs*; get into my Lady’s graces, and I shall
 “not be surprised if I have to send you back to Ox-
 “ford to take orders.”

The vicar said this as if he wished in earnest what he presaged in gaiety. His voice and manner excited my gratitude, and I expressed what I felt. He then again wished me good day, and I left the vicarage.

CHAPTER XI.

Pride moralizing—Morland in spirits—Becomes a builder—
 Meets with a musician, and feels his taste for music revive
 —Tom Murphy—The beautiful cottager.

As I walked homewards I did not fail to fix my imagination on the points of Mr. Whitaker’s discourse that flattered me with the hope of regaining the station in which Mrs. Waller had thought proper

studies; nor should I be mortified to know that the reader suspended the perusal of this chapter to look into the account of *la Chambre Ardente*, which condemned *La Vigoureux* and *La Voisin* to be burnt to death, for vending secret poisons prepared and introduced into France by *Exili*, an Italian.

to place me ; and in spite of my philosophical conclusions between Broke-hall and Holcomb, I felt unspeakable delight in the reflection that I was to escape the livery.

Habituated to mix thoughts of the Deity with all the occurrences of life, I easily persuaded myself to see here an interposition of providence. In spite of the philosophy of the curate of Reading, with which I had, somewhat reluctantly, consented to gild the pill, my imagination had strongly impressed on my mind, that from the moment I put the livery on, I was sunk to rise no more ; it was the bitter alternative imposed upon me by necessity. But necessity and destiny are only modes of man's short-sighted reasoning ; we are in the hands of an ever-active power who rules events, and in whose government impossibility and fate have no existence. Had it been his will that I should be not merely a servant but a slave, I should have submitted without murmuring ; yet I could not help rejoicing to believe, that it was his will to assign me a post on earth more congenial to the knowledge I had acquired, and the feelings I had cultivated.

This hope had been suddenly raised and suddenly withdrawn by Mr. Jones : it could not be again excited to be crushed. The business was, indeed, concluded ; I was absolutely engaged, and Lady Broke had actually declared, that I should not wear a livery ; that she considered me in a light different from that in which misfortune had presented me. It is true that I compared the life I should have led at Affington with that which, from my own observation and Mr. Whitaker's remarks, I anticipated at Broke-hall, and was ungrateful enough to Providence, to regret that, instead of being admitted to the natural, unsophisticated progress of rational existence, I was doomed to minister to the vagaries of

vitiated fancy. My regret, however, was not deep or serious; pleasure predominated in my heart. I meditated the means of accommodating my character to that of my patroness, for so I was fond to imagine Lady Broke; I painted to my imagination motley scenes, in which I took my part; and I kept in view the spires of Oxford. My spirits were elevated; they had not been so high before, since I quitted the University, and I arrived at my cottage with a lighter heart than I left it.

Bridget's cloth was laid, and in a few minutes Nancy returned from the village baker's with a squab pye, a dish in great esteem with the Devonshire people. I have no doubt that I relished it the more from the state of mind in which I sat down to it, for I never afterwards liked any of the same kind half so well. After dinner Ben pressed me again to partake of his physic, but I never was less in want of such medicine. I sat and heightened his enjoyment of it, by talking of his doctor, and joined, without drinking, in blessing the inhabitants of Affington-house.

Having rested some time, and the afternoon being very fine, I went out and took a short stroll in a different direction from my former one. In going through the church-yard the sounds of music caught my ear, and I stopped to listen. They proceeded from the parsonage-house. A player on the piano was accompanied by a player on the violin: the tones and execution of the latter were very fine; but I soon discovered that the former was a learner, the piece being frequently suspended, and bars repeated for instruction. I felt a transient desire to be at the piano, but without loitering continued my walk.

I sauntered but a little way, when coming to the brow of a hill that commanded a beautiful prospect, I threw myself down upon the grass, and, gazing for some time at the country before me, fell impercepti-

bly into a reverie, in which, having laid a solid foundation with the materials of the morhing, I gradually built myself a castle in the air ; but it was a modest one, and had none of those lofty turrets with which I afterwards adorned others equally aërial : a neat parsonage-house, a good garden, and the love of my parishioners—it went no higher—and whether as vicar or curate formed no part of the building. This was of little moment, for the fabric was no sooner completed than it vanished, and left me on the turf, more sensible of fatigue than I expected to be.

I returned to the cottage. Ben Collins was sitting in his rustic porch. I took the opposite bench, and was chatting with the old man when a tall, thin, emaciated youth with a fiddle-case under his arm, and a green bag in his hand, approached the cottage in his way to Exeter. He was in the highway, and as he came opposite the porch he looked at me and touched his hat—I had on my mourning suit. I immediately suspected that he was the musician I had heard at the parsonage, and I entered into conversation with him. He was pleased at my praise of his execution, and finding by my remarks that I was not unskilled in music, readily came into the cottage and played for me. I was charmed : he had not only execution, but taste, and a degree of science in music that seemed beyond his years. It appeared that he came to Affington thrice a week to teach the vicar's daughters. The green bag contained a lute, which he had brought for the younger of them, but he had chosen one too expensive, and was carrying it back. He allowed me to examine it : the tone of it was fine. I followed the impulse of my ear, and without much difficulty picked out one of my own melodies upon it. The touch of the instrument produced a desire to finger it with ease, which I was certain a little practice would enable me to do, and

I enquired if I could hire one at Exeter. The young musician informed me that I could; at the same time offering to go with me to the shop where he dealt, to assist me in the choice. I thanked him, and we appointed to meet next morning at ten o'clock on the green where the regiment, quartered in the town, paraded.

I was punctual to my appointment; the soldiers were out, the band playing, and the parade crowded with persons of all descriptions. I looked every where for my musician, but without success; and then went and waited for him near the band, where it was natural to suppose that he would look for me. The music ceasing, I was surprised at receiving a bow from one of the clarionets, in whom it took me some minutes to recognize the person I came to meet. I returned his salute, and waited till he was at liberty. While I stood in the crowd, I saw young Jones walking with some of the officers before the ranks.

When the parade was over, the young musician joined me in his gay attire, and we went into the town together. He led me through the back streets, in one of which he stopped at a house, and begged me to wait for him till he changed his clothes. This was done in a few minutes, and we proceeded to the music-shop, where, on depositing the full value of the instrument, I hired the very lute that had pleased me the evening before, at two shillings a week. I purchased a book of instructions, and engaged the young musician, whose name was Murphy, to give me some lessons, at the low rate of half a crown, which was what he received from the ladies at Affington.

I was very assiduous at my lute; in the first week I astonished my teacher with my progress, and in the second I played better than himself, for the lute was not his instrument. On the violin, indeed, few could

excel him ; and I expressed my wonder that he should be piping over a drum head instead of leading concerts. This produced the following account of himself, which I shall not give in his own words, as he was illiterate and vulgar, nearly in as great a degree as he was proficient in the melody and harmony of sounds.

He was the son of a man whose name was Murphy, who kept an ale-house at Andover. The father was himself a kind of fiddler, whose tunes seduced many a customer from other little public houses. Murphy, taught by experience the value of fiddling, resolved that his son Tom should be a fiddler too, and accordingly had him taught. Long before he could read he was the charm of the Spread Eagle. He soon outstripped his father, and the report of his talents spread beyond the ale-house. He was sent for to play country-dances in private families, where a decided preference was given to him above all the other fiddlers in the town. From this character he was moved a step higher by a musical amateur, whose estate lay in the neighbourhood of Andover. This gentleman, pleased with the tones the lad drew, took him to his house, and had him instructed by the music master of the family to play in concert. Tom Murphy's talents daily opened, and his patron, resolving to give him a finish, carried him to London, where he was taught to bow by one of the first masters. After some time old Murphy began to miss young Murphy, imputing to his absence the difference in the quantity of beer he drew, and Tom was desired to come home. Tom Murphy, once the glory of the Spread Eagle, now lost all his reputation there ; he would play neither hornpipe nor country-dance, and what were sonatas and capricios to journeymen taylor and cobblers ? Old Murphy was dissatisfied, young Murphy was restive ; feuds

arose, and Tom resolved to fly the paternal roof and household gods. Replete with ideas of independence, he disdained to return to his patron; and, being irritated beyond endurance, sallied forth one morning, and sheltered his independent spirit under the colours of a regiment of infantry: in his own words, Tom listed for a soldier. He had the appearance of more strength and activity than really fell to his lot. His want of muscular energy and superabundance of acoustic sensibility were discovered by the officers much about the same time, and Murphy was turned over to the leader of the band, who, having no use for his catgut, laid a contribution of wind upon his lungs, and, in the payment, gave him his choice of the means, clarionet, bassoon, or horn. Murphy chose the first, conceiving that it would fall the easiest on the taxed part. At the time I first saw him he had been blowing himself into a consumption for some months, and in fact his person was a scarecrow. The officers of the regiment, however, had been very good to him, and allowed him to pick up money by teaching wherever he could get a scholar. This he was compelled to do at an under rate; those who could afford to pay well being always in the hands of regular masters.

This is the essence of what I could gather from Murphy's account of himself. I thought him defective in intellect; but he was young, and, considering the state of his health, in a deplorable situation. I felt great pity for him, and persuaded him to endeavour to obtain his discharge. That, he said, he was very anxious to do, but he had received a bounty on enlisting, and he could not raise the money necessary to supply his place, of course to obtain his discharge, even if the colonel consented. The amount, he said, would be about twelve guineas. I saw that he would fall a sacrifice to the

employment assigned him, and I resolved to make an effort to save him; but I said nothing to him, at the time, of my intention, as it required consideration.

My days had never passed so pleasantly as they did at Ben's cottage, during the period I was waiting my admission to Broke-hall. I read, walked, improved myself on the lute, and enjoyed, if not friendship, a degree of affection from the worthy cottagers under whose roof I lodged: I amused my fancy with ideas of Broke-hall, and visions of preferment, and I meditated on the means of serving poor Murphy. It was no small measure of happiness for one to whose share so little had fallen. I made much of it.

One day, returning from a walk in which I had exceeded my usual stretch, I took advantage of a boat going up the river, and requested the boatman to land me near Affington-house. I had observed that the boat kept uncommonly near the bank; and I was hardly in it before it ran close to a little garden, the turf of which sloped down to the water's edge. At the top of the garden a neat thatched cottage appeared, peeping through lilacs in blossom and flowering shrubs. As the boat stopped, a young person came out of the cottage, and approached us. The simplicity of her dress might have created in my mind a doubt of her rank, had not the elegance of her form and the grace of her motion demonstrated that she was of no common order. If I admired her person as she walked towards the boat, I was dazzled with the exquisite beauty of her countenance, as she drew near. She no sooner, however, perceived me, than she turned, and went back to the house. In a few minutes, her maid came down to the water side, and some things were landed and carried up to the cottage by the man, who immedi-

ately returned, put off, and in about an hour landed me where I desired.

The beautiful cottager kept possession of my imagination while I remained in the boat, and recurred occasionally to it for many days after. The boatmen could give me no account of her more than what I had learned from her packages, which were directed to Miss Alton, at the Hut. I had more than once passed the place without perceiving it, for near the spot where I hailed the boat, the foot-path led through a copse winding along the side of a hill for more than a mile; the paling of Miss Alton's Hut was concealed by the brush-wood that skirted her little domain, and her habitation was so situated as not to be seen from the path. Curiosity and admiration led me once afterwards to explore the position of the hut. The extent of the paling, with which it was fenced down to the river side, inclosed little more than an acre of ground: I ventured to peep over in various places, and got several glimpses of the cottage; but not one of the beautiful cottager. I enquired of Ben and Bridget in vain, for they had never heard of the name of Alton. I was obliged to rest satisfied with my ignorance, for no one whom I knew was acquainted with the object of my inquiry.

As my mind often recalled the transient view I had had of the Joneses, I remembered that Mr. Jones had desired me to call, and let him know when I was fixed. I sometimes thought of interesting him for Murphy, presuming, from his son's acquaintance with the officers of the regiment, that through him the colonel's consent for a discharge might be easily obtained. At other times I imagined that if I could contrive to introduce my musician into Lady Broke's *fête-champêtre*, it might be the means of making his fortune. Again I reflected that they were not incompatible, and my inclination to be once more in

Affington-house seconding my wish to serve this lad, I determined to wait on Mr. Jones.

When I had taken this determination, I pondered on all I should say, anticipated my reception, and foresaw the happy result of my application. How delightful are those moments that are occupied with the contemplation of promoting the welfare of others! How much sweeter still those in which the contemplation is realized !

CHAPTER XII.

A prospect of real happiness suddenly opens upon Morland.

I HAD reckoned without my host in preparing my speech, and anticipating my reception. Mr. Jones went to London the week before on business ; Mrs. and Miss Jones were also from home, being gone to spend some days with a family near Chudleigh, but they were expected back at the end of the week. Young Jones was the only one of the family then resident at Affington-house, and he was not within. I solaced myself for my disappointment by obtaining permission to go through the grounds. I will not describe them : the site afforded ample room for the beautiful ; and the genuine taste of the designer had done little more than prune and train the luxuriance of nature.

Having entered a rustic alcove near the bank of the river, I had scarcely sat down when I heard a rustling among the shrubs behind the seat. I looked, and saw young Jones coming out of a narrow shady path. His pace was between running and walking. His eyes wandering on the ground from place to

place seemed in search of something that he had lost. On perceiving me: "Ha! Morland," cried he, "you there? I have lost a letter, have you picked it up?" He seemed to think of nothing but the letter, which he continued looking for. Having answered him in the negative, I joined him in his search. "I certainly had it here this morning," said he, "and not an hour ago, I sat there with it in my hand." I advanced, and examined the place to which he pointed. It was a seat formed with pieces of rough wood crossed. The letter had gone through one of the interstices, and being caught by a projection, did not fall to the ground, but hung out of sight. "Here it is," cried I, delighted to have found it. "That's a good fellow!" said he, with still greater delight; "I thank you a thousand times; I would not have lost it for the world."

His anxiety for his letter being relieved, he had time to attend to my accounting for his finding me there. "There is no occasion for an apology, Morland," replied he, "I only wish you had come before my father left us. You cannot conceive how interested we are all about you. My father has often mentioned the conversation he had with you, and the manner in which you felt your disappointment. I know he means to serve you. He expected you here almost every day, and finding you did not come, went over to Holcomb, the day before he set out on his journey, to make a fuller inquiry about your situation. Mr. Whitaker was not at home, and I cannot tell you how much he was disappointed at not being able to satisfy himself, before he left Devonshire."—"Good Heaven!" cried I, "and I have been living all the time almost within a stone's throw of your gate; daily and hourly thinking of you; daily, if not drinking your health, at least adding an amen to

“ the toast ; living, too, under a roof of your father’s.”—“ A roof of my father’s ! ”—“ Yes, a thatched one, indeed, but, at the same time, one that exalts him higher in my mind than Affington-house—the cottage of Ben Collins ; where I have seen the old man regularly take his physic, and heard him as regularly bless his doctor ; a blessing that I followed in thought and prayer, as it ascended, with its peculiar incense, to the gate of heaven.”—“ You are an enthusiast,” said Jones, smiling, “ and, let me add, you are not what you have attempted to appear. Who are you, Morland ? Come, we are both young, confide in me, I will not betray you ; you are a gentleman, I am sure.”—“ If education make a gentleman,” replied I, “ perhaps I have as good a title to it as most others, but I answer no farther : there are some gentlemen who cannot trace their descent beyond their grandfather ! I, alas ! am one who cannot trace it even to my father—I never knew my parents.”

There is in infancy and youth a prompt attraction, which, if more frequently attended with repentance than the wary attachments of manhood, is amply repaid by the strong delight of confidence, and the warm interest reciprocally inspired when virtuous friendships are the result of it. Jones’s countenance, as well as his expressions, invited me to open my heart to him. We sat down in the alcove, and I related to him all that I knew of myself, from the time I could recollect, till the day I was sent from Pinhoe to Affington. I intermixed my observations and sentiments on incidental topics, and I concluded with saying, that there was nothing in my fate I so much lamented, as the exclusion of every hope of forming a friendship, such as my studies and feelings had taught me to paint to my imagination, and such as my heart assured me it was capable of.

“ My dear fellow,” said Jones, “ do not attribute
“ the exclusion of that hope to your situation.
“ Friendship is a plant that likes shade ; it oftener
“ rises, and certainly grows stronger, in misfortune
“ than in the sunshine of prosperity. Few, Mor-
“ land, have souls capable of friendship. You may
“ think me happy enough to have found a friend :
“ believe me, not one. I am, indeed, pleased and
“ intimate with several of my companions ; but the
“ sentiments they occasionally betray, and their con-
“ duct at times, keep them on the surface of my
“ heart. One I thought I loved, nay, I did love
“ him ; but he was a villain. He was some years
“ older than myself, and had seen more of the world.
“ He was accomplished, he was handsome. The
“ knowledge he possessed raised my esteem, the sen-
“ timents he uttered were such as my heart adopted,
“ they gained my love : the union of esteem and love
“ is friendship, and the sweet sensation resulting from
“ it was produced by this man ; but he was a hypo-
“ crite. After a year of consummate deception his
“ character unfolded itself, the mask fell off, and I
“ found myself in league with a devil. Astonished
“ at the horrors that opened upon me, I threw my-
“ self into my father’s arms for safety, and, by that
“ means, narrowly escaped a share of the infamy
“ that attached to the villain. When I said I had
“ not found a friend, you must understand me, Mor-
“ land ! I mean among my companions. Nature,
“ in making me the child of the man you saw, had,
“ from my birth, prepared me a friend. He has so
“ mingled the instructions of a father with the fami-
“ liarity and confidence of a playmate, that, before
“ I was twenty, he completely established between
“ us that affection, which, divested of awe on the one
“ side, and of authority on the other, leaves as pure
“ a friendship as can be formed between man and
“ man.”

Jones spoke with ardour ; his soul was in his countenance : such a friendship, so expressed, contrasted the vacuum of my life, and brought tears into my eyes. “ Do not weep, Morland,” continued he, “ I am afraid you have too much sensibility ; I did not mean to make you feel the want of such a parent, and after all, perhaps, I am doomed to be the more wretched for such an advantage.” This required explanation, but Jones stopped and remained thoughtful. After suffering his pause to continue some moments, I interrupted it by saying, I hoped that that was impossible. “ The void which that villain left in my heart,” said he “ was certainly soon filled by my father’s friendship, and by that of my mother and my sister ; yet a few months have made an alteration, and though I doat on them with undiminished love, the void is again opened. My heart is charged with a burden which it cannot repose on them ; I need advice which they cannot give ; I want to reason on a point of which they are no judges. In short, I want a friend, and have been looking in vain among my acquaintance for a man worthy of the name. There are no friends among mankind. Time itself scarcely furnishes three or four instances of true friendship. Men are blind to their real interests. Friendship is the greatest blessing upon earth, but men think and act in such a manner as to be incapable, as to be unworthy of it.”

How did I long to offer him mine ! but I felt too sensibly the difference of our situations to think it acceptable ; besides, young as he was, he seemed extremely nice in his choice, and he delivered his sentiments with an eloquence that surprised me. He went on : “ Inequality of fortune is said to preclude friendship ; but I am not of that opinion, for it can only hold good where the inequality is at-

“ tended with arrogance on the one hand, and base
“ selfishness on the other ; and it is these of them-
“ selves that are incompatible with friendship, not
“ inequality. A man in narrow circumstances may
“ have a great mind, and a man at his ease may be
“ devoid of arrogance. These characters are perhaps
“ better adapted to friendship than persons more on a
“ par in their fortune, who are apt to be assailed by a
“ thousand little jealousies ; whereas, the magnani-
“ mity of the unfortunate, and the unaffected humi-
“ lity of the fortunate, are mutual grounds of esteem,
“ and afford a firm basis for friendship, which is to be
“ cemented by similarity of sentiments, and the ef-
“ fects of an equality of education. Morland, your
“ superiority to mercenary views, which you disco-
“ vered in your desire to live with my father ; your
“ story, your education, the sentiments that have
“ dropped from you since I found you in this alcove,
“ something in your countenance, all convince me
“ that I should be a fortunate fellow, were I capable
“ of inspiring you with that species of friendship so
“ little known, but which alone merits the name.”

What I felt cannot be described. The happiness my heart panted for, but despaired of ever obtaining, Providence unexpectedly and early granted me. Of all men I had ever seen before, of all I have ever since seen, Jones would have been the chosen of my soul, had the election been left to me ! but to be chosen by him was a completion of the blessing in its fullest extent. If my sentiments, if my countenance had been able to inspire him with a desire for my friendship, how were his calculated to strike the chords of my soul. His ideas on the subject were worthy of a Tully ; they seemed to me even to surpass the doctrines of that orator. The lineaments of his face, too, gave assurance of the exalted purity of his ideas. His person was tall and graceful, but it

was his expressive eye and open countenance that so readily infused into my heart the feelings of his own, and there stamped, without scrutiny, the value of his sentiments. There was no occasion for protestations, no need of oaths to bind us to each other. Confidence meets language more than half-way. We were both in want of a friend, we were both in search of one, and we met at a moment when the heart of either was prepared for reciprocal confidence and reliance.

I was not, however, so entirely absorbed in my happiness as to forget the position in which I stood. On the contrary, the more delight I felt, the more was I alive to the apprehension of that happiness being defeated, and I ingenuously declared to him not only the pleasure his regard gave me, but my persuasion of the necessity of my foregoing the familiarity that should be the concomitant of the friendship of which he was worthy, from being so sensible of the value of it. "Recollect," said I, "I came to Affington-house, to offer myself as a servant."

"That shall never be, Morland," replied he; "have patience till my father returns; it is in his power to render such a humiliating resource unnecessary, and I am sure he will do it. How could you suffer the thought of it to enter your mind? I cannot but think that the curate of Reading wanted feeling when he suggested it." I repeated to him Mr. Scot's reasoning, and dwelt philosophically on the arguments with which he had in some degree rendered it palatable. "That," said he, smiling, "might do for a little while; but such a mind as yours requires attachments, and could never find any among those with whom you would necessarily be classed. What is life worth without friendship?"

"Indeed," replied I, "my feelings are in per-

“fect unison with yours, and I should account this
“the happiest moment of my existence, were it not
“attended with a great dread, that, in yielding to
“my happiness, I am by anticipation committing an
“act of ingratitude towards your father, whose benevolent mind has conceived the idea of promoting
“my welfare.”

“Good heavens!” cried Jones, “you know not
“my father, or such a thought would never have
“occurred to you—but you shall know him, and
“when he knows you a little more, he will think it a
“blessing that his son has found a friend whose sentiments are so just; one whom he would himself
“have pointed out to my choice: for he is fully sensible that friendship is rare, and that it is neither
“birth, wealth, nor equality that fosters it; but virtue and knowledge, with kind and amiable manners.
“You shall know him, I say: meanwhile—”

“One thing more,” cried I, “it is necessary you
“should hear; I am absolutely engaged to Lady
“Broke; not indeed as a livery servant, but as some
“sort of attendant, though I am unacquainted with
“the nature of the duty to be required.”—“We
“will talk about Lady Broke by and by,” replied he, “but at present I am impatient to talk to you
“about myself. Come to my room.” Saying this, he held out his hand, a mutual pressure sealed our friendship, and a prospect of real happiness opened to my view.

CHAPTER XIII.

Jones described—Resolves to confide his secret in Morland.

How readily in youth does the heart expand itself to the charm of confidence! how delightful are the early seeds of affection! yet at that period what is enjoyed as friendship, is seldom more than illusion: it is founded on the transient pleasures that accompany it; when the basis fails, the superstructure vanishes. Even that, however, is sweet while it lasts. But when the mind has been early trained by principle, or by misfortune, to a knowledge of the real basis of friendship, what an unspeakable blessing is it in youth! Unenslaved by the passions, it helps to moderate and to guide them, and is not only an enjoyment founded on virtue, as in maturer years, but an active auxiliary in the cause of virtue in its dangerous contests. It is not an every-day prize, but it fell to my lot.

Jones was only a year older than myself: he was not two-and-twenty. Uncommon attention had been bestowed upon his education: he had received the greater part of it from his father, in conjunction with a private tutor, and the formation of the heart had been its chief object, though the usual learning had not been neglected. He had, however, travelled little from home, except under the immediate eye of his father, and the world was still new to him. He was more acquainted with what mankind ought to be, than with what they were; and had a knight-errantry in his disposition that led him to speak and to act according to principle, in defiance of the most rooted prejudices of the world. His passions by nature were strong; and, though he had studied

them, they retained a great degree of influence over him, particularly when he had no doubt that they were on the side of virtue.

Warm in his family attachment, and unaccustomed to lock up his mind to himself, Jones had lately become miserable in the possession of a secret of his own, which circumstances and the known opinion of his beloved family compelled him to confine to his bosom. This he felt a painful burden, and the shock he had met in the treachery of a young man of family, for whom he had conceived a friendship of the noblest nature, seemed to consign him to the solitary contemplation of his thoughts. It had begun to give a degree of restraint to his manners which had been overlooked by Mr. and Mrs. Jones, but had not escaped the penetration of his sister, to whom he would have been happy to impart his secret, but that it was of a nature which peculiarly required his withholding it from her. In this state of mind, guarding his thoughts against those whom he loved best, and struggling to prevent any alteration in his manners, Jones had listened with extraordinary interest to his father's account of me. To the naked facts Mr. Jones had added the result of his discernment, and the suggestion of his benevolence: he had spoken of me as having the learning and manners of a gentleman, had expressed compassion for the state into which I had fallen, and had considered several ways of extricating me from it. Pity is said to be the sister of Love; it may then be, in some degree, allied to friendship. The heart of Jones was prepared for the transition. He had seen me; he wished to see me again; and having been deceived among persons of his own rank, took pleasure in painting me to his imagination exactly in that state that afforded him a hope of such a friend as he wanted. He had, however, resolved to let the at-

tachment proceed gradually, and to endeavour to excite confidence on my part, before he placed his in me. This was the situation of his mind when he found me in the alcove, whither he had returned to search for the letter he had dropped, the contents of which, seconded by my narrative and opinions, acted upon his heart, and impelled him to make an earlier declaration of his sentiments than he intended.

I accompanied him to the house, where, going up stairs, he led me to his apartments, which were over Mr. Jones's library; the inner one was his bed-room, the outer one his study. His writing table stood close to the window. Having seated ourselves, he looked at me with great anxiety in his countenance, and addressed me in the following manner.

“Real virtue, Morland, cannot be the production of opinion; it springs from a more invariable source. I have learned to estimate things, not as they appear in the interested eyes of men, but according to the nature stamped upon them by truth and reason. This cannot be wrong, and if it be, my father himself has been my instructor in it. No, it cannot be wrong—but then, if the opinions of society happen to clash with this rational estimate, we are imperiously called upon to forego our feelings and faculties, and to give up real virtue to imaginary honour. I am at this moment in that position, and I have the misfortune to know that my sentiments differ with my father's.”

“Good heaven!” said I, “where is happiness to be found, if not at Affington! If bitterness is mixed in your cup, who may hope to have his unmingled? Can I complain?”

“We are happy,” said Jones, “for we love one another, and make the esteem of one another the chief object of life. The cause of my anxiety is

“not at home; it has not yet reached my family, but
“I fear it will soon.”

“Oh! stop it, stop it,” cried I eagerly; “let no
“evil spirit interpose to blast your paradise.”

“Against an evil spirit it would have been secure,”
replied he: “no, Morland, it is an angel, it is real
“virtue combating false honour that destroys my
“peace, and which will, I foresee, invade that of
“my family. Though I am happy in them, in my-
“self I am agitated, I am miserable—perhaps when
“I have imparted the secret sorrow with which my
“heart labours, I shall endure it with more ease:
“but it must be confined to ourselves. May I,
“Morland,” continued he, putting out his hand,
which I again pressed, “may I depend on secrecy,
“and will you advise and assist me?”

After the sentiments that had fallen from Jones, I
could have no apprehension that he would require of
me any thing that I should feel the least reluctance
in performing. I assured him that his confidence
should be sacred; I declared that nothing on earth
could make me so happy as to be able to dissipate
his anxiety, and restore peace to his mind. “I have
“then found a friend,” exclaimed he, “and my
“feelings assure me that I shall not be deceived
“again: I will fully unbosom myself.

“About a mile nearer Exeter, on the other side
“of the high road, you must have observed a hand-
“some house built of stone. It is called Ex-Mount,
“from being placed on a hill overlooking the Ex,
“and is the family seat of the Nevills. Mr. Nevill
“came into possession of it before I was born.
“Between his family and ours an intimacy has long
“subsisted, and indeed has been in a manner a
“friendship by descent. Mr. and Mrs. Nevill are
“worthy and amiable in the highest degree. They
“have had a great many children, of whom only

“ two sons and three daughters have survived. The
“ eldest of their sons chose a military life ; he went
“ into the army, and is now lieutenant-colonel of a
“ regiment which has been some years in India ; the
“ younger, Tom, is yet a boy. Sophia, the eldest
“ of the girls, is twenty ; Clara, the next, is just
“ seventeen ; and Anne, the youngest, is turned of
“ fifteen. The happiest moments of my infancy
“ were spent with my sister and the Nevills : time
“ improved our happiness in the change of our
“ amusements ; and dancing, music, reading, and
“ jaunts of pleasure succeeded our childish sports.
“ I delighted in all the family ; but the similarity of
“ our ages naturally attached me most to Sophia.
“ I knew not what love was—I felt that Sophia was
“ very dear to me, and I saw that I was equally dear
“ to her ; but though I am now fully sensible that
“ she had at that early period inspired me with a
“ passion, I was ignorant of the nature of my attach-
“ ment : I should have thought any person mad who
“ should have told me that I preferred her to my
“ sister.

“ About three years ago, my father, judging a
“ knowledge of the country we are born in a neces-
“ sary part of education to those who can afford it,
“ proposed to my mother to travel through England
“ with my sister and me, and as the proposal was of
“ a very pleasant nature, it was soon resolved upon.
“ My mother and sister petitioned for the company
“ of Miss Nevill in our travels ; but Mr. and Mrs.
“ Nevill, after some consideration, formed excuses
“ which my father did not think proper to combat.
“ I felt more pain in leaving Sophia behind than I
“ had ever experienced in my life, and it increased
“ when I saw at parting that she could not restrain
“ her tears. At that moment I became sensible of
“ my passion, and should have declared what I felt,

“ had I not been prevented, by the appearance of
“ her mother, with my sister and the young Nevills,
“ at the door opening into the garden. At first I
“ thought of disclosing my mind to my father ; but
“ from this I was deterred by recollecting that I was
“ little more than eighteen, that every thing was
“ prepared for our departure, and that I had yet
“ many studies to pursue.

“ Though Sophia’s image dwelt upon my mind,
“ the new objects that daily presented themselves
“ also occupied my thoughts, and with my father’s
“ conversation, and my attention to my mother and
“ sister, left me no leisure to be a pining lover ; and
“ after a short time I began to doubt whether the
“ emotion I felt at parting with Miss Nevill was
“ more lively than I should have experienced had
“ she been my sister. As our travels were not
“ merely excursions of pleasure, we stopped a con-
“ siderable time at the most interesting places in
“ the country : being therefore likely to be long ab-
“ sent from Affington, a correspondence had been
“ settled with the Nevills to be supported by each
“ of us. Sophia’s letters to my sister were delight-
“ ful to me, and from time to time renewed the
“ ardour of my feelings, which were again brought
“ to their level by my pursuits and fresh company.

“ We spent the winter in London, where I be-
“ came intimate with the villain I alluded to. He
“ had been introduced to us in the autumn, at a
“ gentleman’s house in Bedfordshire. His name is
“ Montague ; his knowledge is extensive, his senti-
“ ments apparently noble, his manners and elo-
“ quence of the most seductive nature. Possessed
“ of the rarest accomplishments, he seems to be the
“ only person that does not discern them, and he
“ has the art of veiling his superiority under such
“ deference to others, that men of parts feel no jea-

“ lousy in his company, and blockheads believe him
“ their inferiour. His personal advantages too, are
“ of the first rate: he is handsome and well made,
“ strong and active. I was struck with his counte-
“ nance the first moment I saw him; and his flatter-
“ ing attentions afterwards won my affection. He
“ was about five-and-twenty when I became ac-
“ quainted with him; nearly seven years older than
“ myself, but I forgot the difference of age in his
“ society, and cultivated his friendship with an as-
“ siduity only equalled by his own, in cultivating
“ mine. The winter months passed away agreeably
“ and rapidly, and I looked with regret to the ad-
“ vance of the spring, which was to separate me
“ from Montague. I left him in town in the month
“ of April, when our family party set out to pursue
“ the design of travelling through England. He
“ promised to meet me in some part of the country
“ before we finished our travels, and afterwards to
“ pay me a visit at Affington.

“ In the course of the summer we traversed the
“ northern and midland counties, and having visited
“ all that was curious, returned to Devonshire in the
“ autumn. It is necessary to tell you, however, that
“ our correspondence with the Nevills, which, from
“ our going to town, had been chiefly supported by
“ Miss Nevill and my sister, slackened during the
“ winter, and entirely dropped in the course of the
“ summer. Some time slipped away without our
“ observing it, and some time after it was observed
“ before Louisa—that is my sister’s name—before
“ Louisa wrote to inquire into the cause of Sophia’s
“ silence, appointing Chester for our address. Ow-
“ ing to some unforeseen occurrences we did not
“ arrive at that city, for a considerable time after,
“ and when we did there was no letter there for us.
“ This was unaccountable, the disappointment was

“ felt by the whole party, and to me it was torture.
“ I now again became sensible of the excess of my
“ attachment: my imagination invented a thousand
“ causes for this interruption of the correspondence,
“ but sickness and death stood foremost. These
“ were my first sensations of real horror. I concealed their excess, however, as well as I could, by combining them with Louisa’s feelings, to which I had given the alarm by the expression of my fears. My father chid us for anticipating the worst events, when so many others might be the cause of our disappointment, and, making it a point with us that we should learn to moderate our emotions, undertook to write immediately himself to Mr. Nevill. We were then travelling south, and he mentioned Worcester for the place to receive his answer.

“ Not to make my father unhappy, I did every thing to dissipate my anxiety, and disguise my apprehensions. It was clear to me, however, that he was not perfectly easy himself: far from enticing us, as was his custom, to linger in the gratification of curiosity, he often hastened us from places with saying, ‘ come, remember we must be at Worcester by such a day.’ We arrived at that city full a day before it was possible to have a reply from Mr. Nevill. I went, notwithstanding, to the post-office. The western mail had arrived in the morning, but, of course, had brought no letter for us. I left my name, and requested that any so directed might be immediately sent to the inn where we had put up. Notwithstanding this precaution I was at the office next morning before the mail, and after waiting till it arrived, and the letters were sorted, I had the mortification to receive the same answer as on the day before, that there was not one for us. I was now convinced

“ that Sophia was either dead or dying, for I was
“ sure that nothing less would have prevented Mr.
“ Nevill from answering my father immediately.
“ My mind was extremely agitated: I went out of
“ the town to be alone, I yielded to my emotion, I
“ shed a flood of tears. This relieved me in some
“ degree, and I again examined the nature of my
“ feelings towards Miss Nevill. I almost again per-
“ suaded myself that they were of a fraternal nature,
“ for I believed that the loss of Louisa would have
“ made me equally miserable.

“ Having taken time to compose myself, I re-
“ turned to the inn. My mother and Louisa broke
“ out in expressions of anxious surprise, and the
“ look of it was at first visible in my father’s face,
“ but a few moments dispelled it; ‘ for,’ said he,
“ the probability is, that Nevill was out of the way,
“ and did not receive it in time to answer it by this
“ day’s post.’ In spite of this observation, the rest
“ of the day passed heavily, and to me the night
“ yielded no repose. The next morning I was long
“ abroad before the arrival of the mail, and you will
“ easily guess where I loitered; it was no longer in
“ vain; I received the expected letter, and flew with
“ it to the inn: but if the silence of the Nevills had
“ surprised us, how much more were we surprised
“ by the letter that put an end to our doubts!”

Here Jones took a bundle of letters from his desk, and, drawing out the one he was talking of, handed it to me, saying, “ I preserved it; there it is.” I opened, and found it as follows:

“ Dear Jones,

“ I am extremely vexed to find that our letters
“ have never reached you; we have been as much
“ surprised as you at the long intermission of our
“ correspondence. I have written once to you, and

“Sophy twice to Louisa, since you left London. It
“is in vain now to attempt accounting for the mis-
“carriage of the letters, but we all regret the loss
“of pleasure that has been the consequence of it.
“John’s friend, Harry Montague, has suffered much
“anxiety from receiving no answer to the letter he
“wrote to him at the same time that Sophy wrote
“to Louisa, directed, as appointed, to Chester.
“That mail must surely have been robbed. It was
“a long, charming letter, which he read to us at
“breakfast, the morning before he sent it off. He
“complained of a former letter being unanswered,
“in which he requested John to appoint a place for
“their meeting: he mentioned his plans, the occa-
“sion of his journey to Devonshire, drew some cha-
“racters he had met with in the way, and wrote al-
“together with a spirit and vivacity that was de-
“lightful. I am sorry the letter is lost, particularly
“as he is not in the habit of keeping copies.

“Montague has been in Devonshire all the sum-
“mer, and has given us a great deal of his company.
“He was introduced to us by our friend Harrison,
“though, indeed, he would have wanted no intro-
“duction after the repeated panegyrics from you
“and John last winter; and of this he seemed con-
“scious, as he immediately mentioned you all. I
“cannot tell you how much he has ingratiated him-
“self with us. The girls all round the country are
“pulling caps for him. His attentions, however,
“to Sophia, have been too marked to escape no-
“tice. They compelled me to caution my girl
“against affording the apt tongue of envy occasion
“for talk. From what she told me in return, I
“have every reason to expect a proposal from Mon-
“tague, and as I am in love with the fellow myself,
“and as his fortune and connections are adequate to
“my wishes, I have thrown no check in the way of

" his courtship. I am confident he is a man of ho-
 " nour, and I shall be happy to call him my son.
 " Sophy is now turned seventeen, and he is about
 " five-and-twenty: I think they are the handsomest
 " couple I ever saw; but this may be the partiality
 " of a father; and, indeed, I find I have got into that
 " strain, so I will change it before I make myself
 " ridiculous, though that would not be easy with
 " you, my dear Jones, who, I know, have similar
 " feelings.

" The intermission of our correspondence will
 " have one pleasing consequence; we shall have
 " more to hear from you when we meet, which I
 " hope will be long before the winter sets in. You
 " must be back in time to enjoy some of the au-
 " tumn beauties of Affington. Write to me soon,
 " and let me hear about what time you think of be-
 " ing at home. I should have written yesterday,
 " but some business intervening, I assigned the
 " pleasure to Sophy and to Montague, whose letters,
 " I hope, will reach Louisa and John, at Worcester,
 " by the day appointed in yours.

" I did not think I should myself have been able
 " to answer you so soon, but the business I allude
 " to having brought me to Exeter, and being unex-
 " pectedly postponed till to-morrow, I determined
 " to write to you before I return home to dinner.
 " Trusting that you will have received the letters
 " written yesterday at Ex-Mount, four-and-twenty
 " hours before this, I shall only add a repetition of
 " my affection for you and yours.

" I am, dear Jones,

" Your sincere friend,

" ROB. NEVILL."

Exeter, Aug. 20th.

" Our apprehensions," said Jones, renewing his

narrative as he folded up the letter, “ were now
“ removed ; yet the removal was not followed by
“ any expression of pleasure from the communica-
“ tion that effected it. My father expressed sur-
“ prise, my mother coolly wished Miss Nevill might
“ be happy, and Louisa, fixing her eyes on me, re-
“ mained silent; while I, pale, and ready to sink
“ upon the floor, felt the conviction of my passion
“ for Sophia strike on my heart like a thunder-bolt.
“ I am confident, though from circumstances it has
“ never been expressed by them, that my father and
“ mother had secretly taken pleasure in foreseeing
“ the probability of a union between Sophia and
“ me ; and that my sister suspected the nature of
“ my attachment. The manner in which they re-
“ ceived Mr. Nevill’s communication is a convinc-
“ ing proof. Nor was my prepossession unobserved
“ or misunderstood by them, however they might
“ deem it necessary, on finding so complete a bar
“ against their hope, to bury it in oblivion. No no-
“ tice was taken of the state into which I was thrown
“ by the perusal of the letter, and time was given
“ me to recover myself before the subject was far-
“ ther pursued.

“ As the violence of my emotion subsided, the
“ remembrance of Montague’s friendship took pos-
“ session of my mind, and I resolved, if possible, to
“ stem the current of my passion with the reflection
“ of his happiness. I could neither blame him nor
“ Sophia. He had, indeed, frequently heard me
“ talk of her, and had bantered me on an ardour,
“ which, not knowing to be love, I had constantly
“ attributed to friendship : to her I had made no
“ declaration, and to see a preference in her emo-
“ tion at our parting was the flattering suggestion
“ of a young and inexperienced heart. Montague
“ was the handsomest, the most accomplished, the

“ most amiable of men : Sophia Nevill was the most
“ beautiful and amiable of women, possessing an
“ understanding far superior to her years. They
“ seemed formed for each other. It was thus I ar-
“ gued myself into a reluctant submission to my
“ fate, and strengthened my resolution to place my
“ happiness on that of two persons so dear to me.

“ I had written to Montague from the north of
“ England, urging him to meet us in our route to
“ the southward ; but to my surprise and vexation I
“ received no answer to my letter. It now appeared
“ by Mr. Nevill’s that he had written, but that his
“ answer had miscarried. It was something ex-
“ traordinary that so many letters had failed ; but
“ our minds were not prepared for suspicion, and,
“ in lamenting our losses, we imputed them to acci-
“ dent or public robbery. We were, however, more
“ than usually struck with the failure of those men-
“ tioned by Mr. Nevill, which should have preceded
“ his. My father and I together inquired for them
“ at the post-office, in vain ; they never appeared.
“ His had come safe, why not the others ? My fa-
“ ther expressed unusual surprise, and wrote to a
“ friend in London, requesting him to wait upon the
“ secretary of the post-office, and endeavour, with
“ his assistance, to trace the cause of the miscar-
“ riage. He also answered Mr. Nevill’s letter, de-
“ siring him to make strict inquiries, at the office in
“ Exeter : he told him justly, that whatever increas-
“ ed his happiness must add to that of our family,
“ and mentioned the probability of our being at Af-
“ fington early in September, as we were no stran-
“ gers to the counties of Gloucester and Somerset,
“ which lay between us and Devonshire. Before we
“ left Worcestershire my father manifested an in-
“ clination to extend our travels to Wales ; but the
“ season was too far advanced, and the project was

“ deferred to a future period ; besides, we had been
“ now a year and a half away, and we all longed to
“ be again at Affington, where we arrived in the
“ first week of September.

“ The Nevills flew to meet us. If I thought So-
“ phia beautiful when I left her, I now thought her
“ divine. She was in her eighteenth year, and had
“ attained the fulness and perfection of that bloom
“ which had but just begun to show itself at sixteen.
“ The mutual joy of the families at meeting fully
“ occupied our attention, nor was Montague men-
“ tioned for some time. Not that he was absent
“ from my mind, but that I was afraid to utter his
“ name, and felt, on again beholding Sophia, that I
“ could not relinquish her even to him. At last my
“ father inquired for him. On the mention of his
“ name Sophia’s eyes and mine met. I know not
“ clearly what mine expressed ; perhaps a mix-
“ ture of love and reproach : in hers I read a kind
“ of triumph, blended with a different emotion,
“ which I could not develope, but it seemed to me
“ a confused union of defiance and humility : her
“ full look and smile gave way almost immediately
“ to a contracted brow and serious countenance, and
“ these again were presently lost in a slight blush
“ and downcast eye. Mr. Nevill said that Monta-
“ gue had received a pressing invitation to meet
“ a friend in Dorsetshire, on the first of September,
“ to shoot, which, being a staunch sportsman, he
“ could not resist, and had accordingly left Devon-
“ shire two days previous to the great day. Much
“ as I loved Montague, much as I had delighted in
“ the thoughts of his visiting Affington, I felt my-
“ self, as it were, reprieved from death by the in-
“ formation of his absence. Although, for an hour
“ or two after we met, Sophia appeared in spirits, it
“ was not long before I discovered that they were

“ not natural, and that she could not support them.
“ She sunk into thoughtfulness, sometimes border-
“ ing upon melancholy. My imagination gave Mon-
“ tague credit for those reveries, and the idea ren-
“ dered me completely wretched.

“ The next morning I proposed to my sister to
“ walk over to Ex-Mount ; but as she complained of
“ fatigue and appeared indisposed, my mother ad-
“ vised her to stay at home, and I went alone. I
“ raised the latch of the gate, as was my custom,
“ without ringing ; and went, without any notice, to
“ the parlour, whither I was followed by a servant
“ who saw me come in, and who informed me that
“ the family were gone to Exeter in the coach. I
“ asked if they were *all* gone, and was answered in
“ the affirmative. Still I remained, and, being ac-
“ customed to it, the servant, on seeing me sit down,
“ withdrew and shut the door.

“ I looked round to find some object belonging to
“ Sophia that I might sigh over it. I saw nothing of
“ hers in the room but her piano-forte, and I tried
“ to open it that I might kiss the touch of her fin-
“ gers on the keys. This, Morland, this is love : to
“ you, perhaps it appears extravagance, or the
“ dream of poetry, but if ever you love you will find
“ it to be nature. Yes, I could have kissed the
“ keys again and again, and hung and wept over
“ them till the family returned ; but the instrument
“ was locked. Thus disappointed, I thought of So-
“ phia's little study : I remembered that I had al-
“ ways been free to run about the house, and that I
“ had more particularly made use of my freedom to
“ go there, whether she were in it or not ; that I
“ had often, when she was out, sat in her chair, ad-
“ miring the drawings she had left on the table—I
“ thought I might now find some of these left out ;

“ but at all events I should see her room, her books,
“ her chairs, her table, her desk.

“ I had no sooner determined to go than I felt a
“ sudden consciousness of a want of right. Circum-
“ stances were now altered; we were both older,
“ and Sophia was destined for another. Once more,
“ thought I, will be no unpardonable liberty—I went
“ out of the parlour—still my consciousness attend-
“ ed me, and instead of skipping boldly over the
“ steps, I crept up stairs like a thief, anxious to
“ steal my gratification, undetected by the servants.
“ I trod as lightly as I could, looking back as I pro-
“ ceeded. A tremor seized me as I went through
“ the passage that led to the door. I opened it—
“ Sophia! and in tears! ‘Heavens!’ cried I, ‘what
“ can this mean?’

“ Yes, Morland, angelic in her tears, the lovely
“ girl was sitting at her table, her head supported by
“ her hand, and her handkerchief placed to receive
“ the stream that flowed from her eyes—never,
“ never can I forget that moment. She started
“ from her seat, applied her handkerchief to her face,
“ and, as soon as she could speak, said; ‘I own I
“ am entirely unprepared for this visit, Mr. Jones,
“ and you must allow that your appearance is rather
“ abrupt.’—‘Good God!’ exclaimed I, ‘What is
“ the matter, Sophia? What have I done to cause
“ such an alteration in your sentiments towards me,
“ that my coming to your study with my usual free-
“ dom should offend you?’—‘Nay,’ replied she,
“ struck with the justice of my question, ‘I am not
“ offended.’—‘You are hurt then, Sophia,’ said I,
“ ‘that I found you in tears. Why are they shed?’
“ Do not refuse to tell me the cause: am I no
“ longer to be your friend?’ She looked at me,
“ contracting her eye, and echoed the word,

“ ‘friend.’ ‘Are we not friends, then?’ said I. “ She recollected herself, and putting out her hand, “ which I pressed to my lips, replied; ‘Yes, that “ we are, Jones, and, I trust, ever will be. You “ have caught me unawares in a situation I did not “ mean to expose, and I express myself wildly. I “ could account for my tears, but it is not proper “ that I should at present; and if you are my friend, “ you will promise me not to divulge what accident “ has betrayed to you: on this condition we will be “ *friends* for ever.’ She laid a strong emphasis on “ the word *friends*: it included in my idea a refer- “ ence to a favoured lover, who had contracted the “ limits of our attachment: but the wonted familia- “ rity with which she expressed my name was de- “ lightful to my ear, and I promised the secrecy she “ required. ‘Secrecy, you know,’ said she, ‘is “ the soul of friendship.’ ‘And what part of it,’ “ replied I, ‘is confidence? Do you imagine, So- “ phia, that I can be easy, while convinced that you “ are unhappy, without knowing the cause, and en- “ deavouring to remove it?’—‘There is no perma- “ nent cause,’ she replied, ‘you would laugh if you “ knew it; yet, such as it is, I shall judge of your “ regard by your desisting to inquire about it.’

“ She now tried to change the subject, and as I “ had constantly called her Sophia, she caught at “ my last expression, which was—‘Well, be it so, “ Sophia,’—‘You are very fond of my name,’ said “ she, ‘*apropos*, how is Miss Sophia Nugent?’— “ ‘Why,’ replied I, “ do you put that question?’ “ ‘O!’ exclaimed she, affecting spirits, ‘you think “ we country-folks know nothing of what happens “ in the metropolis.’ I solemnly protested that I “ did not know what she meant. ‘Nay, Jones,’ “ said she, ‘it is unworthy of you to asseverate so “ strongly. It is nothing to me; I only meant to

“ rally you on your passion : and I did not imagine
“ that the affair was intended to be kept secret in
“ Devonshire, when it was public elsewhere, and
“ your choice generally approved.’ I again assured
“ her on my honour that I had never heard a word
“ of it till that moment. ‘ Nor ever,’ said she,
“ ‘ spoke or wrote your sentiments of Miss Nugent
“ to any confidential friend ?’—‘ *Confidential friend !*
“ Sophia,’ replied I, finding that she alluded to
“ Montague, ‘ whose confidential friend do you
“ mean ? mine or yours ?’—‘ True !’ said she, faint-
“ ly, and turning very pale, ‘ that’s an awkward cir-
“ cumstance.’

“ She leaned her face on her hand, said she felt her-
“ self ill, and begged me to leave her, and send her
“ maid to her. I rose to go, but stopped to tell her
“ that I had a thousand things to say, and feared I
“ should not soon have such an opportunity again.
“ Her face being covered by her hand, I did not
“ observe that she had fainted while I was speak-
“ ing, till I caught her in my arms as she fell from
“ her chair.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Jones continues his narrative.

AT the lively remembrance of the incident he was relating, Jones was greatly affected. He stopped a few minutes to compose himself, and then proceeded thus :

“ Laying her gently on the floor, I ran to the
“ bell and rang it, then returned and knelt by her
“ in the greatest agitation. Her maid came up im-
“ mediately, and seeing how I suffered, begged me

“not to be so uneasy, saying that her mistress
“would soon come to herself, and that she had
“been lately subject to fainting-fits, which were
“soon over. While she spoke she rubbed Sophia’s
“temples with hartshorn, now and then holding the
“vial to her nose. In a few minutes she opened her
“eyes and sat up, but it was only to shed fresh
“tears. Fearing they were now partly occasioned
“by my presence, I asked her if I should leave her.
“She nodded, and waved her hand towards the
“door. ‘But how can I leave you in this state,
“Sophia?’ cried I, in agony. She made no reply,
“but by an increased flow of tears. ‘If you will
“go into the parlour, Mr. Jones,’ said her maid,
“‘my mistress will soon come down to you, or I
“will come and let you know how she is.’ Conceiv-
“ing from this that some point of delicacy required
“my absence, I warmly kissed my hand to Sophia,
“and with tears in my eyes, left the room.

“Excuse, my dear Morland,” continued Jones,
“the minuteness with which I dwell on these inci-
“dents; the images of them are strongly impressed
“upon my mind, and I feel a great, though melan-
“choly, gratification in describing them. After I
“had paced the parlour from one side to the other,
“for more than half an hour, the door opened, and
“Sophia entered, perfectly recovered, smiling, and
“more beautiful than ever.

“‘Jones,’ said she, as she advanced, ‘I am sorry
“you have had any pain on my account; but the
“fact is, that these unaccountable fainting-fits, and
“this involuntary shedding of tears have, as Mary
“told you, attacked me occasionally for some time
“past, but they have never yet happened before my
“father or mother, and as I know it would make
“them very unhappy, I have engaged Mary, who is
“as faithfully attached to me as ever, not to speak

“ of them ; and I entreat you, as you value my
“ friendship, not to give the slightest hint, either
“ here or at home, of what you have seen.’ I as-
“ sured her that I would obey her, upon condition
“ that she would consult Mr. Rundle, our apothecary,
“ if her malady were really of a constitutional
“ nature, and that she would convince me that she
“ was serious in her profession of friendship, by re-
“ posing in me, if any part of it arose from mental
“ causes. ‘ From mental causes !’ said she, ‘ what
“ do you mean ?’—‘ I hardly know what I mean,’
“ replied I, ‘ but that I am at a loss to conceive
“ that thoughtfulness and tears should be the con-
“ sequence of personal ailment without any other
“ illness ; and, to say what I think, you appear to
“ me unhappy, Sophia.’—‘ I know not,’ replied she,
“ ‘ why you should think so.’—‘ Nor I, except from
“ your thoughtfulness yesterday, and your tears to-
“ day, for I understood that—’ here I faltered, and
“ added, ‘ that you were the reverse.’—‘ Come,
“ come,’ cried she, ‘ you are low yourself ; let us
“ talk of Sophia Nugent. Do you deny that you
“ ever loved her ?’—‘ That question, Sophia,’ re-
“ plied I, ‘ is to me unintelligible : let us talk of
“ what is better understood by us both ; let us talk
“ of Harry Montague.’ ‘ Well,’ cried she, gaily,
“ ‘ let us talk of Harry Montague ; let me hear a
“ repetition of the panegyrics you lavished upon him
“ last winter in your letters to my father.’—‘ After
“ what I have heard, Sophia,’ said I, ‘ I have no
“ doubt that the repetition would please you, but
“ you must excuse me ; I feel I am unequal now to
“ such an exertion.’—‘ Exertion !’ exclaimed she
“ with surprise, ‘ nay, it was your own desire.’
“ —‘ True,’ replied I, ‘ but I only wished to hear
“ from your own lips that you had bestowed your
“ heart upon him.’—‘ Oh !’ said she, with a feigned

“ smile, ‘ that is asking too much : besides I would
“ rather refer you to your friend himself for an an-
“ swer : if he says yes, I will not say no!’—‘ Does
“ Sophia Nevill,’ said I, ‘ speak to her friend in
“ enigmas?’—‘ Do not be serious,’ replied she ; they
“ ‘ will soon be resolved : your friend will certain-
“ ly be here in the course of the next week, or early in
“ the week following, and there will be an end to all
“ mystery, if there is any. Now, tell me about my
“ namesake ; where did you first see her ? when did
“ you first like her ? and how did you declare
“ your passion to her ? by a *billet-doux* or on your
“ knee?’ ‘ Shall I refer you to the lady herself,
“ Sophia?’ said I : ‘ no, I have already answered
“ you, and at a moment that precluded trifling.’—
“ ‘ Do you mean to persuade me then, Jones,’ said
“ she, ‘ that there is no such being?’ ‘ Far from
“ it,’ replied I, ‘ Miss Nugent is a very fine girl ;
“ as such I admired her, walked with her, danced
“ with her, rode with her ; but she was surrounded
“ with admirers, and coquetted with them all,
“ though engaged to be married. Under such cir-
“ cumstances her beauty would never have made its
“ way to my heart, had she been the only Sophia on
“ earth. But I see plainly that Montague has been
“ trifling with my name : it was not friendly.’—
“ ‘ No, no, no,’ cried she, interrupting me eagerly,
“ ‘ he has the warmest friendship for you, and never
“ speaks of you but in the highest terms of praise
“ and affection. He will certainly be here in a few
“ days, and we shall understand one another very
“ well when he comes.’—‘ I am undone, Sophia ;’
“ cried I, ‘ my silence has undone me, but I will
“ now preserve it as long as I live. I will not make
“ you unhappy, Sophia ; I will bear my wretched-
“ ness in secret.’

“ This,” said Jones, “ is one of the inconsisten-

“cies of love ; I betrayed my passion in declaring
“my resolution to keep it a secret. Sophia likewise,
“in her determination not to understand me, disco-
“vered that she understood me but too well.

“ ‘ I am sorry you have any thing to make you un-
“happy,’ said she, ‘ any thing that it is necessary to
“hide from a friend, which believe me I am ; but as
“it is necessary, I will not inquire into it, and, in-
“deed, I think you ought not to divulge it.’ These
“words, her look, her manner, all clearly showed
“that she knew what was passing at my heart, and
“that she dreaded an explanation ; which she
“evaded without much difficulty : for though my
“soul was at times on my lips, my sense of the deli-
“cate situation in which I stood, both with respect
“to Sophia and to Montague, aided her endeavour
“to repress the avowal, and we were parted by the
“return of the family, without my confirming with
“words what no words could have rendered more
“clear.

“ Well, Morland, not to tire you with details,
“though, alas ! too interesting to me, the week, the
“fortnight that was to bring Montague back, passed
“away, and still Montague was destroying par-
“tridges ; or, at least, he left his mistress to console
“herself for his absence, with the supposition that
“his passion for bringing down the birds continued
“to sway him in preference to the passion that was
“to have brought him to Ex-Mount in a few days.
“A third week elapsed, and Montague neither came
“nor wrote. In all this time I was never once
“alone with Sophia, who I several times saw avoid-
“ing the opportunities that offered, which she had
“never done before.

“ My affection for Montague was weakened ; but
“while I dreaded his return, I wondered at the apa-
“thy that could suffer him to live so long from the

“ most beautiful of women, whose hand was waiting
“ the moment he could break away from a barbarous
“ pleasure. From dreading that moment, I now felt
“ indignation at finding the time so shamefully pro-
“ tracted, and hoped that Sophia might display a
“ spirit that should crush pretensions so carelessly
“ supported. I conceived, however, that I could
“ read in her countenance mortification and humili-
“ lity prevailing over pride : in watching her looks I
“ also fondly fancied that they told me her prefer-
“ ence of Montague was not so decided as her fa-
“ ther thought ; and, reflecting on her raillery re-
“ specting Miss Nugent, I began to suspect that he
“ had purchased this show of preference by a base
“ perversion of truth. If so, thought I, she has already
“ discovered the cheat, already thrown from her
“ heart the unworthy deluder of it, and I may yet
“ hope. This idea, once raised, was eagerly con-
“ firmed by my imagination, which now painted to
“ me Montague ashamed to face me, afraid to deny,
“ and incapable of supporting the treachery which
“ could not but be detected. Oh, Morland ! what
“ miserable days, what wretched, sleepless nights did
“ I pass at that time !

“ Montague’s unaccountable conduct threw an
“ awkwardness on both families whenever we met,
“ for from being, at first, frequently mentioned by
“ Mr. Nevill, with a degree of rapture and high ex-
“ pectation, he gradually became the subject of his
“ surprise and anxious conjecture ; and was at last
“ entirely, yet sullenly, omitted in his conversation.

“ As for me, a renewed hope had sprung up in
“ my breast, and I resolved, be the consequence
“ what it would, to lay my heart open to Sophia.
“ The consciousness of Montague’s neglect, the cer-
“ tainty of its being noticed by all who knew of his
“ assiduities at Ex-Mount, and the painful attempts

“ of our family to render the Nevills easy on the
“ subject, sometimes by favourable suppositions,
“ and sometimes, indeed more generally, by avoid-
“ ing every allusion to it, so wounded her feelings,
“ that for a considerable time past, she had fre-
“ quently made excuses for not accompanying Mr.
“ and Mrs. Nevill in their visits. They had then an
“ invitation from Sir Nicholas and Lady Broke, to
“ whom we also were engaged, and I determined to
“ seize the occasion to obtain an uninterrupted con-
“ versation with Sophia. I was confident she would
“ not go; I therefore rode over to Broke-hall,
“ on the morning of the appointed day, to make an
“ excuse for myself, which I told my mother I
“ meant to do, and as she and my father knew my
“ opinion of the Baronet, it required no explana-
“ tion.

“ Having thus secured the opportunity, I waited
“ in Exeter, till the parties were on the way to
“ Broke-hall, and then went to Ex-Mount. On go-
“ ing in I was told that nobody was at home, but
“ proceeding to the hall I was met by Mary, who
“ begged me to step into the parlour. ‘ Mr. Jones,’
“ said she, ‘ you had better not see my mistress,
“ it will only make her more unhappy.’—‘ Then,
“ Mary, you know she is unhappy.’—‘ I don’t mean
“ to say unhappy,’ replied she, ‘ but vexed and un-
“ comfortable, as who would not? and she desired
“ to see nobody.’—‘ Surely,’ cried I, ‘ she will see
“ me.’—‘ Indeed, Sir, pray forgive me,’ said Mary,
“ ‘ but she particularly desired that nobody should
“ be let in to-day, not even you, if you should hap-
“ pen to come.’

“ This girl is a worthy creature, and had been in
“ the family for some years, in the last two of which,
“ her place was that of Sophia’s maid. Her attach-
“ ment to her mistress was great, and she had trea-

“ed me, while yet but a boy, with marked kindness ; I had an affectionate regard for her, and always spoke to her freely and kindly. ‘ Mary,’ said I, ‘ I must see her, I have something very particular to communicate, and wish to see her alone, which I may not soon have another opportunity of doing.’ On hearing this she consented to carry a message up to her mistress, and in a few minutes returned with an answer that she would come down presently. It was some time, however, before she came, and my imagination painted her in the situation I had formerly found her in, which made a delay necessary, that she might compose herself before she appeared.

“ At length she entered, with her usual grace, and with that captivating smile that wins the heart ; but her face had lost its natural vermilion ; a slight tinge of it lingered on her cheek. ‘ How comes it,’ said she, ‘ that you are not at Broke-hall?’—‘ Will you,’ replied I, ‘ agree that we shall both candidly answer the question reciprocally put? How comes it, Sophia, that you are not at Broke-hall?’ ‘ Have you ever found me uncandid?’ said she. ‘ Not uncandid,’ I said, ‘ but lately mysterious. Do not be mysterious with me, Sophia ; there is not on earth a being so anxious for your happiness as I am : you will believe me when I assure you that I am ready to sacrifice my own to it. I have disengaged myself on purpose to see you, to tell you all I feel, all I wish, all I would do for you.’ ‘ Jones,’ said she, with a countenance in which pity, affection, and distress were mingled, ‘ do not make me wretched by expressing a wish that it is not in my power to grant. I *will* be candid. Alas ! I *now* understand you but too well. Would to heaven I had understood you as well when you left us ! But it

“ is too late. Once more let me refer you to your
“ friend.’—‘ But,’ cried I, ‘ you promised that I
“ should see him a month ago. He does not come :
“ where is he ? what is he about ?’ She gazed at
“ me and was silent. ‘ Does such apathy, such ne-
“ gligence, deserve a woman like Sophia ? Do they
“ not disgust ? Will they not root out the favour-
“ able impressions made by a deceitful exterior and
“ showy accomplishments ?’

“ The slight colour she had brought into the
“ room with her, forsook her cheeks : the paleness
“ that overspread her face and neck alarmed me. I
“ dreaded a similar relapse to that I had witnessed
“ in her study, and, taking her hand, besought her
“ to support herself. She could not, however, re-
“ frain giving way to a shower of tears, during which
“ my sensations were most miserable.

“ After a few minutes, but while the tears still
“ flowed down her cheeks, she said : ‘ My mind is
“ lately become very weak and easily agitated. It
“ is some nervous disorder—You must not imagine,
“ Jones, that there is any other cause. As for the
“ seeming neglect to which you allude, you are mis-
“ taken ; and even if you were not, my pride would
“ never suffer me to give it a moment’s considera-
“ tion, far less allow it to humble me to tears. I
“ took your advice, and spoke to Mr. Rundle ; I
“ shall get better by and by.’—‘ God grant it !’ ex-
“ claimed I : ‘ but, Sophia, let me not lose this op-
“ portunity of settling my own agitated mind, by
“ precisely ascertaining the situation of yours in re-
“ gard to Montague. Tell me, I conjure you, tell
“ me, are you engaged to marry him ?’—‘ Jones,’
“ said she, endeavouring to resume composure, and
“ looking at me steadily, ‘ my father has the first
“ right to the answer to that question ; but he has
“ never thought of asking it, for he does not ima-

“ gine I could engage myself without his consent.”
“ —‘ Your father,’ replied I, ‘ had no doubt that
“ Montague meant to propose himself to you.’—
“ ‘ Attend to me,’ said she; ‘ the moment I per-
“ ceived your friend’s intention, and I could not
“ doubt it, I did my duty—’ as she said this, a tear
“ again started to her eye, but she repressed it—‘ I
“ did my duty, and apprized my father of my ob-
“ servation. He knows no more, nor shall I create
“ an uneasiness which may be altogether prevented
“ by a little longer delay : but I think it incumbent
“ upon me, my dear friend,—yes, Jones, you are,
“ you ever shall be among the dearest of my
“ friends—’ here, again, her eyes were full of tears,
“ ‘ I think it incumbent upon me,’ she said, ‘ to put
“ an immediate end to every doubt and every hope
“ on this subject ; *I am irrevocably engaged to Mon-
“ tague.*’

“ Though I had dwelt for many weeks on the cer-
“ tainty of this confession, I seemed altogether un-
“ prepared for the shock ; I clasped my hand, and
“ remained dumb and motionless, while Sophia,
“ melting at the effect it produced upon me, yielded
“ to her emotion, and again gave way to tears. It was
“ some time before I could speak, and not till she
“ said ; ‘ Jones, you distress me extremely.’ Thus
“ recalled to a sense of Sophia’s situation, I strove
“ to conquer my feelings, and to persist in the reso-
“ lution of preferring her happiness to mine.—
“ ‘ Happy Montague !’ cried I, ‘ may all the bless-
“ ings of life crown your union ! Yet, Sophia, what
“ means his absence ? Do you not think it strange ?’
“ —‘ I do,’ she said, ‘ for he solemnly promised me
“ to return in the course of ten days or a fortnight
“ at farthest, and ask my hand of my father.’—‘ It is
“ now more than a month,’ said I. ‘ I cannot ac-
“ count for it,’ she replied—‘ some accident may

“ have happened to him, or perhaps some new face
“ detains him.”

“ She spoke this with so great a degree of indifference, that it inspired a remnant of hope that she had suffered herself to be piqued into this engagement, and encouraged me to say: ‘ Is your heart decidedly Montague’s, Sophia ?’—‘ After what I have said,’ replied she, ‘ what answer can I give to that question ?’—‘ But,’ said I, ‘ should he prove unworthy the——’ ‘ Stop,’ cried she, interrupting me, ‘ I have plighted my hand ; and be assured, Jones, *that I will never be the wife of any other man than Montague.*’

“ I now told her that as I found her resolution so fully taken, it only remained for me to assure her, that I would as long as I lived love her as a sister, and with a fervour that would ever prompt me to sacrifice my feelings, and my life itself to her welfare. As I said this, she regarded me with an interest that, but for what had passed, I could have construed into an indication of love ; and she exclaimed that I merited a worthier heart than hers, but that while I continued to think her deserving the affection of a sister, she should ever be proud and delighted to consider me as her friend and brother. There was in her manner and conduct a striking but inexplicable inconsistency ; for while the latter crushed every hope, the former seemed calculated, in spite of herself, to obviate despair.

“ The consequence of these countervailing impulses was, that I resolved, before I finally relinquished her, to see Montague, and to talk to him of her. Nor did my patience allow me to wait his leisure : on quitting Sophia I resolved to go immediately to him, wherever he might be. When I expressed my wish to my father, he readily consented, and had even been thinking of proposing

“it himself to me. He said that he felt extremely
“for the Nevills, as in every company, the time of
“Montague’s return was the constant question;
“and at Broke-hall Sophia’s absence had not been
“passed over without an insinuation and a sneer.

“I had heard Montague speak of his Dorsetshire
“friend, whose name is Palmerston, to whose house
“I immediately went, and found that he had left it
“above a fortnight. Being, however, determined
“to see him, I followed him to another friend’s in
“Wiltshire. There we met, and he received me
“with a warmth and cordiality that wore the ap-
“pearance of unabated friendship; and when I
“gently reproached him for the neglect of his pro-
“mise to meet me on our tour, he accounted for it
“so circumstantially, calling in his French valet,
“François, to declare that he had himself carried
“the lost letters to the post, and repeating to me
“the contents of them, that I was perfectly satis-
“fied on that head. But when I spoke of his quit-
“ting Devonshire, just as I was returning home,
“and of his silence since, he smiled, and said he had
“a good deal to say on the subject; and that far
“from having to complain of him, I should find his
“conduct, even in that particular, an exertion of
“his friendship; but he insisted on postponing the
“conversation till he had introduced me to the fa-
“mily, to whom he was on a visit. As the short de-
“lay could make little difference, I yielded, and
“went with him to be presented to his friend,
“whose name is Bettesworth. My thoughts con-
“stantly wandering to Sophia, and my mind being
“anxious for an explanation of Montague’s intentions
“respecting her, I passed the day under a restraint
“little suited to render me agreeable to the gay so-
“ciety into which I was unexpectedly hurried. I
“was absent and incoherent; and, to complete the

“ confusion and tumult of my mind, Montague’s as-
“ siduities to the elder Miss Bettesworth, a fine girl,
“ about nineteen, were by no means of an equivocal
“ nature.

“ Early the next morning he came, of his own ac-
“ cord, to my room. With the most insinuating ad-
“ dress he took my hand, and calling me familiarly,
“ John, as was his custom, he assured me that he
“ was more interested in my happiness than he could
“ express. ‘Judge,’ said he, ‘of the sincerity of
“ my heart by the candour with which I shall con-
“ fess an unwarrantable piece of artifice, of which I
“ have been guilty respecting you : and let the friend-
“ ship that prompts my present determination secure
“ my pardon for having once harboured a thought
“ of attempting to supplant you in the heart of the
“ lovely Sophia Nevill.’—‘Attempting!’ exclaimed
“ I, ‘say not attempting; for if ever I possessed
“ such an interest in Sophia’s breast, you have been
“ fully successful in superseding me there : but I do
“ not blame you, Montague, for I never confided in
“ you my feelings towards Miss Nevill—indeed, I
“ knew them not myself—and that you should love
“ her does not excite my wonder; I only wonder
“ how you have been able to protract your absence.
“ I should be inclined to dispute with you such a
“ prize, were I not certain that there does not re-
“ main the shadow of a chance for me.’—‘You are
“ mistaken, John,’ replied he, ‘believe me, you,
“ and you alone, are the possessor of her heart.’

“ I heard him with astonishment; I gazed for an
“ explanation.—‘Hear,’ continued he, ‘and be
“ convinced. It is true you never directly made me
“ the confidant of a passion for this lovely girl, and
“ I might therefore take the occasion to exculpate
“ myself completely in regard to our friendship; but
“ I am superior to such a subterfuge. It was clear

“ to me that the flame lay dormant in your breast,
“ and would break out on your return home ; but it
“ did not enter into my imagination that I should
“ ever feel an interest or a wish to smother it. Ac-
“ cident carried me into Devonshire before you ; an
“ accident, too, that was the consequence of my re-
“ ceiving no answer to the letter I wrote to you
“ while you were in the north ; for after waiting full
“ a fortnight for it, I yielded to the repeated solicit-
“ ations of my friend Palmerston, and accompanied
“ him to his seat in Dorsetshire, where I met Har-
“ rison, who prevailed upon me to go with him to
“ Exeter. Having heard you extol Miss Nevill, it
“ was natural for me to wish to see her, and who
“ that sees her once but must wish to see her again !
“ I was introduced by Harrison at Ex-Mount, where
“ I repeated my visits too frequently to resist Miss
“ Nevill’s charms. By Heavens ! John, I became
“ desperately enamoured. I soon, however, disco-
“ vered that the state of her heart was towards you
“ precisely what yours was towards her ; that there
“ wanted but a breath to kindle the flame. Thus
“ circumstanced, what could I do ? I own it would
“ have been heroic to have conquered my own feel-
“ ings ; that it would have been noble to have torn
“ from my fancy the hope of bliss, and thrown you
“ into each others arms ; but in the character of
“ man there is not so difficult a part to play, and I
“ confess I was unequal to it. I fondly persuaded
“ myself that as you were still ignorant of each
“ others sentiments, the smothering of an embryo
“ passion would neither be painful nor difficult. I
“ was convinced that you would conquer yours from
“ principle, once that Sophia were engaged to an-
“ other, and I really was not bound by any thing
“ that had passed between you and me to refrain
“ from a suit to which I was so irresistibly impelled :

“ my great obstacle lay with Sophia, and my object
“ was to smoothe the way to the removal of it. I did
“ every thing in my power to render myself agree-
“ able to her, but I observed that she was always
“ more pleased with me when I spoke in your praise
“ than when I was the most anxious, by my looks
“ and my attentions, to show her the impression she
“ had made upon my heart. Trusting to the argu-
“ ment with which I had persuaded myself that the
“ conquest of a passion merely incipient would not
“ be attended with much pain, I had recourse to
“ the artifice I alluded to. Before I proceed, John,
“ give me your pardon ; and give it me, not because
“ I deserve it, but on these grounds ; the witchcraft
“ of Sophia’s charms, and the impotence of the
“ trick : nay, forgive me in consideration of its hav-
“ ing proved the inviolable attachment of the woman
“ of your heart.’

“ Here I interrupted him : ‘ What can you
“ mean ?’ cried I, ‘ have you not engaged the hand
“ of Miss Nevill ?’—‘ Restrain your impatience, my
“ dear friend,’ said he, ‘ and hear me out. At the
“ confession I am about to make, you will, no doubt,
“ feel a resentment rise ; but I beseech you to re-
“ strain it till you have heard me out, for then, I am
“ confident you will pardon me.’ I desired him to
“ proceed. ‘ I conceived,’ said he, ‘ that if Miss
“ Nevill were persuaded that your heart was attract-
“ ed by another woman, it would soon leave hers
“ free for the admission of another attachment. I
“ tried the stratagem, I talked of Sophia Nugent,
“ with whom you used to dance last winter. I had
“ several of your notes by me, in which you artless-
“ ly betrayed your prepossession for Sophia Nevill
“ by expressions the force of which was unknown to
“ yourself. I easily managed to change Nevill to
“ Nugent, and I showed those passages to Sophia,

“ without seeming to have any view in the communication. At first it appeared to have the effect I wished : I redoubled my assiduities, I assailed her heart by every means I could devise ; she seemed to listen to me with pleasure : I perceived I had made some impression on her mind, and by incessantly pressing a return of my passion, obtained a reference to her father. This was a great point gained ; but I was not satisfied to receive my happiness from any decision but that of Sophia, and I prevailed upon her at length to say that she would be mine. I have, however, some reason to think that she consulted her father. Nevill is a worthy and an amiable man, and as he was generous enough to afford me every opportunity of addressing his lovely daughter, I resolved to pay him the compliment of making a formal request of it. Your looks ask me, why I did not. There is the question : in the answer to which, I know your principles too well to doubt the concurrence of your opinion. Would you, John, marry a woman of whose heart you had not the entire possession ?”

“ I said, ‘ certainly not.’—‘ You have then answered the question yourself. I soon discovered that my judgment respecting Sophia’s freeing her heart from her youthful prepossessions sufficiently to admit another attachment was erroneous. I saw that I was, indeed, agreeable enough in her eyes to be thought of as a husband ; but then, I as clearly saw it was because she imagined you in different to her. John, be assured that you are in full possession of that girl’s love. When I had daily proofs of this, in her manners and in her conversation, I became uneasy at the length to which my courtship had been carried ; for I was not unconscious that the eyes of the world had been for some time upon us. To relinquish a heart that

“ I could not make completely mine to a friend like
“ you, to whom it originally belonged, and by whom
“ I knew it to be infinitely prized, is not to me a
“ very difficult task: with me love soon quits his
“ hold, if he be not completely reciprocal, and of
“ course I have not a heart that can be broke on
“ such an occasion. My passion for Sophia, at the
“ time your father’s letter to Mr. Neville announc-
“ ed the period of your return to Affington, had,
“ upon the conviction of your being really the ob-
“ ject of her soul, subsided into a fraternal friend-
“ ship, and I would have given my whole fortune to
“ have seen you united to her. Her person, indeed,
“ retained all its attractions, but to a rational being
“ what is the person without the heart? I too well
“ know that they who marry for personal charms
“ alone very soon repent their folly. I had, how-
“ ever, entangled myself in my scheme of hope; I
“ knew not how to recede without wounding Miss
“ Nevill: during the last week I was in Devonshire
“ I was secretly the most unhappy of men. I was
“ resolved to speak my mind freely to Sophia; but
“ when I considered that I had absolutely urged her
“ into an engagement, and that the world spoke of
“ her preference, I repeatedly shrunk from the
“ painful task. In this state I received Palmerston’s
“ letter reminding me of my promise for the first of
“ September, and I determined to wait a more fa-
“ vourable opportunity, which I hoped your return
“ would give me; for I believed that a few inter-
“ views between you and Sophia would give me bet-
“ ter grounds to go upon, and even perhaps produce
“ a direct dismissal from her. These were the
“ views I had when I left Ex-Mount, and I have
“ protracted my absence to give a greater scope for
“ their being accomplished: Jones, she must, she
“ shall be yours.’

“Conceive my emotions, Morland,” continued Jones, “during this explanation. Though the progress and issue of Montague’s passion were unfortunate, they appeared to me natural and rational ; and my heart whispered me that his discernment of Sophia’s partiality was accurate : her agitations, her tears, her looks, even some of her expressions actually confirmed it. If so, I could not have blamed him had I been even an indifferent auditor ; for, enamoured as I was, I would not have married her myself on such terms ; but alive to the enchantment of new hope, I threw myself into Montague’s arms, regarding him as a paragon at once of taste and of virtue. Instead of talking of pardon, I called him my friend, my preserver, and my guardian-angel.

“I need not tell you that he was delighted at the effect his speech had upon my mind : we consulted on the best means to be adopted to save Sophia’s pride, and it was determined that he should write to her, explain his reasons, and formally absolve her from her engagement. Before I delivered the letter I was to reason with her, and to press my own suit. As to the opinion of the world, I was to prevail upon her to yield so far to the necessity of the case as to go into company, and to speak of him with indifference, while on my part I reported the real fact of the artifice Montague had used to divert her affection from its original channel, which was to be confirmed in a penitential letter from himself to me. I was to forgive, Sophia to resent, his conduct ; and the lovely girl was to bestow her hand on him whom her heart had early elected. Such was the rapturous project with which I was fraught on my return to Devonshire.

“Montague having written the letter brought it

“to me to read. I thought it a master-piece of eloquence, reason, and virtue. It contained a relation of his friendship with me, his passion for her, the artifice he made use of, and the change of his feelings towards her, first regretting the cause as to himself, then congratulating both on the timely prevention of a union which must have been attended with jealousy and reproach, or, what is perhaps worse, with indifference. The sentiment, the reasoning, the style of the letter were calculated to persuade, to convince, and to charm. After I had read it, he carried it back to his own apartment to seal, then returned with it to me, charging me, as he gave it, to deliver it privately, and not to stay with Sophia while she read it. I thanked him again and again; I told him he had given me new life; he embraced me affectionately, and I set out for Exeter, my imagination fired with the most delightful anticipations.”

CHAPTER XV.

Continuation of Jones's narrative.

“ON the road,” continued Jones, “Sophia's words so emphatically pronounced, *I will never be the wife of any other man than Montague*, constantly recurred to my mind; but I softened the recollection by reflecting that they had followed, and were the result of her declaration, that she was *irrevocably engaged to him*. Having plighted her hand, it was natural for her to conceive the engagement irrevocable, and the consequent determination was inevitable in such a mind as Miss Nevill's. I

“ indulged my fancy in obviating these obstacles ; I
“ carried with me the key that was to unlock the
“ chain in which she had unconsciously been fetter-
“ ed, that was to restore freedom to her decision ; I
“ pleaded my cause with all the ardour of a lover, I
“ painted Sophia as yielding to the united powers of
“ reason and passion, and I became in idea the hap-
“ piest of men.

“ Having promised Montague to deliver his let-
“ ter unseen, and to let the communication proceed
“ at first from Sophia, I wished to obtain an inter-
“ view with her before I saw my father ; and what I
“ thought hardly possible, chance threw in my way.
“ Unable to pass Ex-Mount, I ordered the postboy
“ to ring at the gate. From the servant that came
“ to it I learned that Mr. Nevill was gone out on
“ horseback with Sir Nicholas Broke, and that the
“ rest of the family were walking through the
“ grounds with Lady Broke and some other com-
“ pany. I sent the post-chaise on to Affington with
“ my portmanteau, and a message ; and I went in,
“ hoping to find the opportunity I so anxiously de-
“ sired. Mary met me at the door of the house ;
“ she told me that her mistress had been all the
“ morning at Affington, whence she was but just re-
“ turned, and had gone up stairs to her own room.
“ The family from Broke-hall had come while she
“ was out. I thought the occasion favourable, and
“ I sent Mary to tell Sophia that I earnestly intreat-
“ ed her to see me in her study, as I had something
“ very particular to communicate to her. In less
“ than two minutes she returned with permission.

“ Sophia was taking off her hat as I entered ; her
“ cheeks glowed from the effects of the air and her
“ walk : I never saw her more beautiful, more to ad-
“ vantage, than as she advanced to meet me, with
“ her smile, and offered hand. I seized it, and

“pressed it with rapture to my lips—‘Go to,’ said she, ‘this kind of gallantry is not written in the code of friendship: I shall shake hands with you no more.—So we had like to have met on the road; I am just come from Affington-house. And pray where have you been rambling, Jones? Is it a secret?’—‘In quest of your happiness, Sophia,’ replied I, ‘and perhaps my reward will be to have found my own; to have found it combined with Sophia’s.’—‘Jones,’ said she, ‘I intreat you once more, if you have any regard for my peace, to turn your thoughts into a different channel; for be assured that the reward you allude to, and my peace are incompatible.’—‘So you at present imagine,’ cried I, ‘but I have a talisman that shall alter your opinion.’—‘Impossible:’ said she, shaking her head. ‘Nay,’ cried I, smiling, ‘more than probable. I conjure you to answer me one question seriously and candidly, for my fate hangs upon your answer: had you never heard of such a person as Sophia Nugent, would you have plighted yourself to Montague?’ She looked thoughtfully at me, but made no reply. ‘I will not urge you,’ continued I, ‘to confirm by words a silence so sweetly explicit.’—‘Why,’ exclaimed she uneasily, ‘will you persist in examining a subject, which presents nothing to either of us, but wretchedness extreme?’—‘Happiness,’ cried I, ‘happiness. Montague has confessed the artifice: he blushes for it, and releases you, Sophia, from the fetters he so artfully contrived to fix upon you. Here,’ said I, taking his letter from my pocket, ‘here is my talisman: read, be charmed, and no longer think of robbing me of the reward of my disinterested passion:—yes, I adore you, Sophia.’

“As I spoke, with the letter in my hand, the

“ blood forsook her cheeks. ‘ A letter for me ?’
“ said she, faltering, ‘ and from whom ?’ ‘ From
“ Montague.’—‘ Have you seen him ?’—‘ I left him
“ yesterday morning in Wiltshire. He acts nobly ;
“ Sophia : his reason predominates over his passion
“ —he relinquishes his rights—’ —‘ ‘Tis false ;
“ Jones,’ she cried, ‘ by Heaven, ‘tis false !’ Her
“ lips quivered ; there was a wildness in her look as
“ she pronounced this asseveration, which she did
“ with an emphasis, and in a pitch of voice I had
“ never before heard her attempt. I was con-
“ founded : she snatched the letter from my
“ hand, and instantly tore it open before I could
“ comply with Montague’s injunction of leaving
“ her to read it alone. As she opened it an inclo-
“ sure fell upon the table : of this he had given me
“ no intimation. Her eyes seemed to fly over the
“ letter, while sudden changes of countenance
“ marked the deep perturbation of her mind, and
“ she could not possibly have attended to any point
“ of his reasoning, when, with a ghastly smile, she
“ faintly uttered, ‘ No, by Heaven, ‘tis true !’ She
“ then opened the inclosure, stared at the paper as
“ she read, and burst into a frantic laugh ; then
“ gave an hysterical scream, and dropped suddenly
“ on the floor.

“ Though shocked and alarmed, I was afraid to
“ ring the bell while the letters that had caused this
“ dreadful agitation remained in sight. I looked
“ round the room for her hartshorn, and not finding
“ it, went into her chamber, which adjoined the
“ study, and thence into a dressing-closet, where,
“ after some search, I found the phial, with which I
“ hastened back, hoping to bring her to herself
“ without other assistance. Guess what I felt on
“ returning, to see Lady Broke standing by Sophia’s
“ breathless body, reading Montague’s inclosed

“note. ‘What do you mean, Madam?’ cried I, “snatching it from her hand. ‘Nay,’ said she, ‘it “was natural to look for the cause of Miss Nevill’s “illness, and you need not have been so hasty, for “it concerns you too nearly, Mr. Jones, for me to “have kept it from you.’ I had now put both the “letter and inclosure into my pocket, and was rubbing Sophia’s temples with hartshorn. ‘Poor “thing!’ continued Lady Broke, ‘I am shocked to “see her in this state: but Mr. and Mrs. Nevill are “more to be pitied; though it must be confessed, “they are not altogether without blame. Do not be “uneasy, Mr. Jones; she will soon recover. It is “a providential interference for you.’—‘Madam,’ “said I, ‘your language is all a riddle to me.’—‘It “cannot be so long,’ replied she: ‘meanwhile I “think it would be better that you leave the room, “lest an abrupt result of the girl’s unfortunate situation should embarrass us.’—Her meaning now was “but too evident—‘Infamous insinuation!’ cried I. “‘Very well, Sir,’ said she, ‘you will have the “goodness to take care of the paper you have; and “if you choose to stay and see Miss Nevill unlaced, “you must.’ Saying this she rang the bell violently.

“Roused by Lady Broke’s vehemence, I exclaimed, addressing the inanimate form of Sophia; “‘Yes, I will leave you at present, loveliest of your “sex! and virtuous as lovely! nor will I suffer any “contaminated breath to soil your fame.’ I then “rose from my kneeling posture, and in a distracted state, bade Lady Broke beware how she uttered the slightest suspicion against the honour of “such an angel. ‘If you are so far gone,’ replied “she, ‘I pity you; but I think the paper you have “pocketed will cure you: go and read it.’ I staid “not to reply, but meeting Mary on the stair-case,

“ begged her to come to me in her master’s library,
“ whither I was going, as soon as she could leave
“ Sophia. I was no sooner in the library, than I
“ took the fatal letters from my pocket, and, having
“ bolted the door, hastily perused the private one
“ that had dropped from the other, as she eagerly
“ tore it open. Here is the original,” continued
he, taking it out of his drawer, “ I have kept it as a
“ master-piece of villany. It is no secret ; for hav-
“ ing been read by Lady Broke, you may take it for
“ granted it was faithfully reported.” I took the
letter from Jones, and read as follows :

“ Command yourself, Sophia ; be rational, and
“ reflect that not only your own honour, but the
“ happiness of your family, perhaps the life of
“ some of them, depends upon your conduct in the
“ present crisis of our affairs. I refer you to my
“ letter which incloses this for the arguments that
“ may be publicly used in support of our mutual in-
“ terest in declining a union, and even of our moral
“ obligation to relinquish the thought of it. They
“ are founded on truth, Sophia, however unfortu-
“ nately late it has operated. Your attachment to
“ Jones is but too evident : it was sown in your heart
“ before we met, and I am fully satisfied of the im-
“ possibility of its ever being rooted out. But
“ I will not repeat what I have said in my letter,
“ which will convince you, that under such a per-
“ suasion our marriage would not only be certain
“ wretchedness, but a crime of an enormous kind.
“ *That* letter is calculated to meet the eye of the
“ world, when you and Jones have arranged your
“ plans ; all blame will redound on me, and yet I
“ shall meet pity, and even be applauded for the
“ virtue that prompts me to release you from the
“ engagement in which my artifice had involved

“you : *this* letter is for your eye alone ; and here
“let me conjure you to take the only advice
“that can avert the mischief, which threatens to
“be the consequence of our having inconsiderately
“anticipated those intimacies which we intended
“to consecrate by marriage, but which we can-
“not now confirm by legal ceremonies, without
“committing a much greater sin. You love Jones,
“*he* adores you. He is ardent, and will press an
“early union : his family doat upon you, your own,
“in resentment to me, will be glad to hasten your
“marriage with him. It *must* be hastened, Sophia ;
“you understand me well, it *must* be hastened ; in
“which case the remaining months will afford op-
“portunities of managing the future concealment as
“to time. I shall have received my pardon ere the
“period of your confinement, which may be con-
“trived to take place unexpectedly at a distance
“from Devonshire, perhaps among some of my
“friends, while I take care to keep Jones out of
“the way, and divert his ideas from every train
“of suspicion. Believe me, my friend, it will be
“easily managed ; and, by your present prudence,
“you will convert the misery that now threatens
“those most dear to you, into general joy. I know
“you will feel repugnant to the art which this ad-
“vice implies, but think of the effects it is to pro-
“duce : the preservation of your own fame, the
“salvation of your family. You will perhaps ex-
“claim—What ! impose upon the man I love ;
“present him the child of another as his !—I
“own the justness of your emotion. Your feel-
“ings will be very painful : but by determining to
“endure those feelings for a while, you make him
“happy ; whereas the consequence of a discovery of
“your situation is wretchedness to him, to your fa-
“mily, to all connected with either of you ; for I

“ know he loves you too much to bear life without
“ you. I detest hypocrisy, but what I advise is
“ none—Your fidelity, your confidence in future,
“ and the consciousness of his being the real object
“ of your affection, will reward his love, and in time
“ relieve your own mind from the pain of this single,
“ necessary, I will say, virtuous, concealment. You
“ have too good an understanding, Sophia, not to
“ yield to the necessity of our unhappy fate, and I
“ shall therefore only add that in resigning you to
“ the man of your heart, I have struggled severely
“ with my own passion; but the thought of remain-
“ ing a secondary object is worse than death. Had
“ I been fortunate enough to have been the princi-
“ pal one in Miss Nevill’s mind, I should have been
“ the happiest of men, in being united for life with
“ the noblest and most beautiful of women. Grant
“ me, however, your friendship, accept of mine, and
“ pardon the feelings, I beseech you, too lovely So-
“ phia, which led to an error, in its result so painful,
“ yet in its progress so bewitching.

“ H. M.”

“ Consummate villain!” exclaimed I, as I con-
cluded the perusal of this finished piece of base ef-
frontery. I felt my indignation gradually rise from
the first line; and, at the last, temperate as my dis-
position was by nature, I could have blown the writ-
er’s brains out, without remorse. Jones wiped a
tear from his eye and repeated after me; “ Con-
“ summate villain, indeed!”—“ Does he live?”
said I. “ Did he not deserve death?” replied he;
“ but you shall hear.

“ You may, in some degree, imagine, from your
“ own feelings, what mine must have been as I
“ read this letter. At first a chill ran through my
“ blood, and a kind of stupefaction, for some mo-

“ ments, suspended the use of my faculties : as this
“ returned, I doubted my senses ; but that doubt
“ was soon removed by a repetition of the perusal
“ of the letter. I then assured myself that it was a
“ fabrication, and some new artifice of Montague’s
“ to secure, by a threat of slander, Sophia’s easier
“ resignation of a hand now devoted to Miss Bettes-
“ worth : alas ! this delusion soon vanished like the
“ former ; the style as evidently bore the marks of
“ truth as of villany, and I concluded with believing
“ that the scoundrel had really triumphed over her
“ virtue. The most agonizing images rushed on my
“ fancy : rage and resentment took possession of my
“ heart ; and I formed the resolution of ridding the
“ world of the monster.

“ While I was in this state, the letter still in my
“ hand, I heard a noise in the hall, and presently
“ Mrs. Nevill’s voice, crying, ‘ where ? what’s the
“ matter ? ’ Shortly after this a violent ringing, and
“ persons running about the house. I easily con-
“ ceived the occasion to be Mrs. Nevill’s return and
“ distress, and being convinced that Lady Broke
“ would refer her to me for the letter, I resolved it
“ should not appear, and putting it into my pocket-
“ book, tore another into very small pieces and scat-
“ tered the fragments on the floor. I had scarcely
“ done this when some person tried to open the
“ door, which I ran and unbolted, and Mary came
“ in with tears in her eyes. ‘ Is Sophia recovered ? ’
“ cried I. ‘ No, Sir,’ replied she, ‘ and Thomas is
“ gone for Mr. Rundle. Oh ! dear Mr. Jones, I am
“ afraid she will never recover.’—‘ Where is Mrs.
“ Nevill ? ’—‘ In the room with her.’—‘ And Lady
“ Broke ? ’—‘ Where you left her.’—‘ How came she
“ up stairs ? ’—‘ Being tired of walking, she returned
“ to the parlour before the rest of the company,
“ and she ran up on hearing Miss Sophia scream

“and fall—so she told me before my mistress came in.”—“Has she said any thing about Miss Nevill?”—“Oh! yes, yes; first to me; and afterwards to my mistress. My poor mistress is at this very moment distracted between attending to Miss Sophia and quarrelling with her Ladyship. She has ordered me to come and look for you, and to beg you not to go out of the house till she sees you.”

“My agitation,” continued Jones, “was extreme: I would have flown from the horrors of the scene, had I not been restrained by an irresistible power that would not suffer me to move before I heard that Sophia’s senses were recalled. I desired Mary to tell her mistress that I would wait, and that I begged her not to attend to what Lady Broke said. Left again by myself, the sad reflections that occurred excited in my mind the most poignant grief. That Sophia had been seduced by the diabolical machinations of the arch-fiend who had profaned the names of friendship and of love was too evident; but it was no less clear that he had used no common means, and that the virtue he had sullied was innate in her heart, was firmly rooted, and not to be plucked from its soil. The injury it had sustained could not even shake it: by whatever means Sophia had been deceived, she considered her deceiver as her husband; and her peace, perhaps her life, would be the forfeit of her having confided in the treachery he had practised: but sullied it was, and far from ever recovering its lustre in the eyes of the world, calumny would but too surely augment and fix the stain, though in the sight of angels it had perhaps rested no longer than the breath does on polished steel in the sight of men. Such were my thoughts, and I resolved, not only on account of Sophia, but for the sake of her fa-

“ mily, and for the sake of my own family, whom
“ the misery would reach, to extenuate the fact re-
“ vealed by the letter, and to counteract, as well as
“ I could, the ready report of Lady Broke, whose
“ memory I hoped to prove was not very tenacious,
“ particularly on so cursory a perusal as she must
“ have given the letter.

“ Fresh ringing, and another bustle took place
“ in the hall, which I presently learned from Mary,
“ who returned to me, was occasioned by the abrupt
“ departure of all the company without seeing Mrs.
“ Nevill. ‘Is Lady Broke gone?’ said I. ‘She is,
“ Sir!’ replied Mary, ‘my mistress bid her go; for
“ no sooner did Miss Sophia open her eyes than,
“ seeing her Ladyship, she fainted away again.’
“ Knowing that Mrs. Nevill was alone with Sophia,
“ I would fain have gone up to her, but Mary per-
“ suaded me not to go, lest my presence might have
“ a similar effect. While she was with me Mr.
“ Rundle rang at the gate, and she went to show
“ him up stairs. I now remained a considerable
“ time alone in a situation even more pitiable than
“ Sophia’s. At length I was joined by Mrs. Nevill,
“ who had left her daughter to the care of Rundle to
“ come and learn the contents of the dreadful letter
“ which had produced such an effect. Her eyes
“ red and swollen with weeping, she advanced and
“ asked me for it. ‘My dear, dear Mrs. Nevill,’
“ said I, pointing to the scattered shreds on the
“ floor, ‘in the height of my indignation I tore it to
“ pieces.’—‘Then,’ exclaimed she, ‘we are lost,
“ for we shall have no testimony against the tongue
“ of Lady Broke, whose assertions will but be cor-
“ roborated by what you have done, false as they
“ are.—Yes,’ cried she, bursting into fresh tears,
“ ‘false; for I will pledge my life on my Sophy’s
“ honour.’ Saying this she leaned her head upon

“ my shoulder, and wept bitterly. I said that I
“ imagined Lady Broke misunderstood the letter,
“ which was indeed an infamous one, threatening
“ Sophia with defamation if she opposed the views
“ expressed in the cover which enclosed it, and that
“ I would be assiduous in counteracting any slander
“ that might be the consequence of the effect it had
“ had on Miss Nevill.—‘ Oh ! the villain !’ cried
“ she : ‘ there was no need of such a threat to pre-
“ vail upon my girl to give up a man who could
“ but form such a wish. Where is the other letter ?’
“ I said I would give it to her if she desired it, but
“ that, being partly the subject of it myself, I knew
“ not how to remain in her presence while she read
“ it. ‘ You need not blush, my dear boy,’ said she,
“ embracing me, ‘ at what he can say of you : be-
“ sides, I already know, by Lady Broke’s informa-
“ tion, his proposal respecting you, and all I shall
“ say about it is, would to God we had never seen
“ this bad man ! Give me the letter.’ I obeyed
“ her, but before she had time to read half a page
“ of it, Mary came in to tell her that Sophia was
“ come to herself, on which she put the letter into
“ her pocket, and flew out of the room without say-
“ ing a word.

“ I continued to walk to and fro in the library, for
“ I was unable in the sad state of my mind to leave
“ Ex-Mount. In about half an hour Mr. Rundle
“ came, and proposed to carry me home in his car-
“ riage. I requested him to give me first some ac-
“ count of Miss Nevill, and to tell me whether he
“ thought her life in danger. He said he did not
“ think her in immediate danger, and as to other
“ particulars, he would talk to me on the way, but
“ that he wished we should both be out of the house
“ before Mr. Nevill returned : on which I imme-
“ diately accompanied him, and we left Ex-Mount.

“ From Mr. Rundle I learned that, after repeated
“ faintings, Sophia, partly in a deranged state, and
“ partly in a rational and firm manner, in defiance
“ of his presence, avowed her situation, and related
“ the villany that had been practised by Montague.

“ The villain having, as he hoped, removed from
“ her mind all previous prepossession, urged his
“ own passion, with which she confessed herself to
“ have been pleased, declaring, that at that time
“ she would not have scrupled to give him her hand,
“ had he asked it of her father: but that soon after,
“ her mind experienced a change in consequence
“ of some improprieties which she discovered in his
“ conduct, not however so glaring as to justify a
“ breach. He contrived to reinstate himself in her
“ good opinion. One evening, towards the conclu-
“ sion of a dance given by Mrs. Nevill, Sophia was
“ taken ill, and retired to her study, at which he
“ appeared more than commonly anxious, and was
“ permitted to carry her some wine and water him-
“ self. In a few minutes she was so much revived
“ as to return to the company, and to go down
“ another dance with Montague, but as she got to
“ the bottom of it, a giddiness coming on, she re-
“ quested him to take no notice of her retiring, and
“ bade him good night. She spoke to her mother
“ as she left the room, saying she should be better
“ after a night’s rest, and went to bed, where an
“ unaccountable confusion in her brain took place.
“ It lasted all night, going gradually off towards
“ morning; and she remembered listening a con-
“ siderable time, uncertain whether dreaming or in
“ reality, to the arguments and persuasions of Mon-
“ tague, before she was fully sensible that it was no
“ dream. Peace from that moment forsook her
“ breast; but the villain had art enough to ensure a
“ temporary concealment, altering her first resolu-

tions of horror, by the picture he drew of the consequences of disclosure, while he stated the ease with which his fault in the anticipation of his happiness might be repaired; pleading the irresistible violence of his passion, and entreating her to become his wife. With the same horrid engine, fear, he effected a continuation of his intercourse, while he was fertile in finding plausible pretexts for delaying his marriage; sometimes urging the necessity of first settling his affairs, which would take but a short time, as soon as he could tear himself from her; sometimes compelling submission by tyrannical hints of desertion. Thus terrified into a passive endurance of guilt, Sophia began to lose her health, and consciousness combining with natural causes reduced her to the sad state I have already described. When Montague left Ex-Mount he assured her, that he should not spend two days with Palmerston, but proceed immediately to town to look into the state of his affairs and settle them completely, when he would return, and demand her hand formally of her father.

"Poor Sophia!" continued Jones, wiping his tears away; "she was the victim of an infernal treachery. Sooner would she have died, had not her faculties been chained by the influence of some diabolical potion. Rundle assured me, that he had no doubt, from her description of her feelings, that the villain had administered drugs that were at once to stupify and inflame. I expressed grief, horror, and execration, and I was about to impart the resolution I had formed, when I recollected that the disclosure might be the means of preventing it; I therefore listened to Rundle, and coincided in the decision taken by him and Mrs. Nevill, to keep the fact if possible from her father's know-

“ledge, and to accuse any reporter of it of slander.
“Mr. Nevill was the most open and unsuspecting
“of men, but he was as firm as he was delicate on
“the subject of female purity; he was besides a
“man of high spirit, and the consequences of his
“knowing what had happened were every way to
“be dreaded.

“It was almost as difficult to explain the events
“of the morning at Affington-house; for my father
“was as nice in his opinions as his friend, Mr.
“Nevill. Rundle had undertaken, at the express
“desire of Mrs. Nevill, to be the first to relate and
“to soften the circumstances to him; but, as it was
“with his concurrence that I had gone after Mon-
“tague, I was puzzled how to act: I agreed, how-
“ever, upon going in, to leave the relation to my
“companion, and to corroborate as I could.

“This was scarcely determined, when, turning
“in at the gate, we met Lady Broke’s carriage.
“‘Alas!’ cried Rundle, ‘calumny has outstripped
“us; the tale is travelling fast in every direction of
“the country, and through every street of the city.’
“Lady Broke ordered her postilion to draw up
“close to our chaise. ‘Well, Rundle,’ cried she,
“‘you have been at Ex-Mount: is it a miscarriage?’
“—‘Indeed, Madam,’ replied he, ‘your imagina-
“tion in this case has been too rapid—it is all a
“mistake.’—‘O dear,’ said she, smiling contemp-
“tuously, ‘I dare say so. Mr. Jones,’ continued
“she, addressing me, ‘I hear that you were the
“first favoured lover, and that you adroitly con-
“trived to make the lady over to your friend. Mrs.
“Grimwood has been here rallying your father on
“the occasion; for I no sooner mentioned the cir-
“cumstance, than she said it had long been sus-
“pected, and that it was generally believed, that
“Montague’s conduct was owing to his conviction,

“ that you had been his predecessor, and let me tell
“ you, Jones, the letter you pocketed in a passion
“ will confirm the fact, unless you can explain. I
“ don’t wonder now, at the violence of your beha-
“ viour this morning. It will behove you to explain.”
“ I made no reply, but ordered the post-boy to
“ drive on.

“ At home I found my mother and sister in tears,
“ and my father very grave. Rundle contradicted,
“ hoped, extenuated, without removing the sorrow
“ that the tale had raised, which was less counteracted
“ by his anxiety, than confirmed by my melancholy
“ silence. My father asked me, if I had seen Mon-
“ tague, and if he were coming back. On my say-
“ ing, I had seen him, but that he did not mean to
“ return at present, a general silence took place,
“ till Rundle said, that the fellow’s conduct was
“ very unaccountable; but that it behoved Miss
“ Nevill’s friends to oppose the torrent of slander
“ which had broken loose. ‘ We must be guided by
“ circumstances,’ replied my father; ‘ the Nevills
“ are all very dear to me.’ He then changed the
“ subject, and my mother and Louisa retired. Mr.
“ Rundle soon after left us.

“ As soon as we were alone, my father made mi-
“ nute and circumstantial inquiries respecting my
“ meeting with Montague, and the occurrences at
“ Ex-Mount. In all my communications with my
“ father, I had never in my life deviated from that
“ candour which is the corner stone of family hap-
“ piness; nor could I now: indeed, any secret that
“ could affect the Nevills was as safe with him as
“ with me. I therefore related to him, without re-
“ serve, the extent of their calamity. ‘ Poor Nevill!’
“ cried he, ‘ my heart bleeds for him. His soul
“ was wrapped up in that girl, and no wonder; she
“ was one of the loveliest, both in mind and person,

“ I ever saw : but she is gone, gone for ever.”—
“ ‘ Oh ! Sir,’ exclaimed I, shuddering, ‘ God forbid !’—‘ It is but too true, my dear boy,’ replied
“ he, ‘ and it is right it should be true. Whether
“ her conduct break her father’s heart or not, she
“ must be dismissed from his family : to uphold her
“ were to contaminate the rest ; were to confound
“ society, and dissolve the charm of marriage.’—
“ ‘ Do not say *her conduct*, Sir,’ cried I, ‘ but—’
“ ‘ —I must say her conduct, John,’ resumed my
“ father, interrupting me ; ‘ for though I allow what
“ you would suggest, as to want of power to prevent
“ the diabolical crime committed by the wretch
“ who now deserts her, the continuance of her intercourse
“ with him completely associated her in
“ his guilt. What virtue would for an instant have
“ endured it ?’—‘ Will you,’ said I, ‘ allow nothing
“ for the terrour produced on her mind, for her sol-
“ citude to avert from her family the horrors of a
“ disclosure, for her inexperience, for the anguish
“ she has sustained, the health she has lost ? Oh,
“ Sir, Sophia is innocent, Sophia is virtuous.’—‘ I
“ cannot, John, allow her to be pure,’ replied he ;
“ ‘ she is no longer a companion for the virtuous ; no
“ man of any sensibility will ever think of her as a wife,
“ no family ever receive her as a daughter. With respect
“ to yourself, my dear boy, whatever grounds
“ Montague had to believe the attachment he talks
“ of, whatever might have been your bias previous to
“ this discovery, I would not, for my life, give birth
“ to an idea that any dishonourable or indelicate view
“ could remain lurking in your breast. And as for
“ her, poor, wretched girl, she would be void of all
“ grace indeed, could she divest her mind of her
“ being betrothed to the man whom she considered
“ so long as her husband, or ever look upon herself
“ but as his wife while he lives. But see, my son,

“to what an extent vice spreads: either Montague has been infamous enough, by insinuations to involve your character in this unfortunate affair, or the tongue of common calumny has been busy with it. This slander will fall more heavily upon you than you are aware of, if it be not removed before it fixes: not a parent but would mention your name with horror; not a door belonging to any family but would be barred against you.’

“Shocked at this suggestion, and recoiling from the very idea of the charge, I threw myself into my father’s arms, assuring him that he had made me shudder, and begging him to save me. ‘O, Heaven!’ cried I; ‘What a world is this! That I loved Sophia Nevill is too true, but that I ever had a thought of degrading her soul is most false.’ ‘I believe it, John,’ said he, embracing me, ‘and I have no doubt that we shall be able to repel this attack upon your honour, which, I trust, will be unsullied through life.’ He then advised me to be absent from home for a week, and it was agreed that I should go and pay a visit to a friend of ours who lives near Chudleigh, where my mother and sister are just now. Little did my father think, that he afforded me an opportunity of pursuing, unmissed, the villain who had destroyed my happiness.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Conclusion of Jones’s narrative.

JONES paused for a few minutes, as if unable to proceed, till he had again silently reviewed some of the

images raised by his narrative, and now lingering on his mind. At length he exclaimed :

“ Oh! they were dreadful scenes ! dreadful, indeed, Morland !—Well! instead of going to Chudleigh, I turned towards Wiltshire, resolved to put Montague to death, or fall myself. Life was painful to me, and if any thing could diminish its wretchedness I felt it would be the consciousness of revenging the injuries of Sophia. On the road I meditated the manner of accomplishing my design. I recollected that at foils, with which we had often amused ourselves the preceding winter, we were nearly a match : I seldom received a hit which I did not repay. I therefore resolved that our encounter should be with swords, for I knew that he piqued himself upon his skill, and would prefer them. With respect to my own opinion, I really doubted which was the better fencer ; but I was confident that I had the advantage in my cause, and I painted to my imagination the conscious criminal appalled, and receiving the punishment he merited.

“ Though I had always thought Montague a man of great courage, I now apprehended that the sense of his guilt would induce him to shun me if I gave him an opportunity, which I determined not to do, and I accordingly provided myself with two swords before I reached Twyford, the little village near which Mr. Bettesworth's estate lies. Having informed myself that he was still at his friend's, I wrote a short note, telling him that I had something very particular to communicate to him, that I had a reason for not going to the house, and that, when he received my note, I should be alone on the common near Mr. Bettesworth's fence. I sent it by a countryman, that

“ he might not have an opportunity of enquiring
“ into my motives, and I went immediately to pitch
“ upon a spot the least exposed.

“ After walking about a quarter of a mile I came
“ up to the entrance of an exhausted quarry, which
“ was in many parts overgrown with turf, and en-
“ tirely out of sight till nearly approached. Placing
“ the swords, which I had managed to take with
“ me unobserved, by the side of a furze-bush, I
“ walked to the spot nearest Mr. Bettesworth’s
“ palings, where I did not wait long before I ob-
“ served Montague at a little distance making to-
“ wards me. I appeared not to see him, and drew
“ him on following me till I was again at the en-
“ trance of the quarry : there I turned, and eyed him
“ with horror and inexpressible agitation as he came
“ up.

“ He advanced with his usual smile, till reading
“ my purpose in my countenance, he assumed a se-
“ rious look, and exclaimed, ‘ What is the matter ?’
“ — ‘ Language,’ replied I, ‘ has not words to tell
“ the matter, or to express my sentiments upon it.
“ I come not to talk with you, choose one of these
“ swords and defend yourself.’ I took them up as
“ I said this, and presented them. ‘ What!’ cried
“ he, putting them both aside with his hand, ‘ So-
“ phia then has acted like a fool ! I am sorry for it ;
“ but I am not disposed to take your life on that
“ account.’ — ‘ But, wretch,’ cried I, ‘ I am disposed
“ to take yours ; nor will I leave you till I have re-
“ venged the ruin you have brought upon my friends,
“ and the cool insolence with which you marked
“ me out for your dupe : once more I say, defend
“ yourself.’ The villain smiled with ineffable ef-
“ frontery, and taking one of the swords, put himself
“ on the defensive. I instantly attacked him with
“ all the energy and skill in my power. He parried

“ my thrusts without returning them, till finding me
“ almost exhausted by rage and exertion, he told
“ me he saw that I was only playing with him: ‘ but
“ come,’ said he, ‘ drop your point, and I will give
“ you a piece of information.’ I was not sorry to
“ recover the error into which passion had led me,
“ and I dropped my point. ‘ Jones,’ said he, on
“ seeing this, ‘ you know nothing of the weapon
“ you have chosen. You presume on having some-
“ times touched me with the foils; but let me tell
“ you that I used to allow you those hits for the
“ mere satisfaction of pleasing, and to give you a
“ good opinion of yourself.’ Irritated by this, and
“ feeling it an insult, I cried, that it was false, and
“ I would prove it to be so. ‘ Then,’ replied he,
“ ‘ you must not be so violent in your next assault,
“ or you will be again in my power.’ This but pro-
“ voked me the more, and I immediately assailed
“ him. He now returned my thrusts; I parried
“ several of his, but he soon wounded me on my
“ right side, and seeing the blood, again desired
“ me to desist. I maddened with rage, I said it was
“ an accidental scratch, and making a desperate
“ thrust, I thought I ran him through the body;
“ but at the same instant I lost my sword, which,
“ on my recovering my position, I had the mortifi-
“ cation to see in his hand. He smiled, and pre-
“ sented it to me, saying, coolly, he hoped that I
“ would now take the other also.

“ His smile and assurance pierced me more pain-
“ fully than his sword could have done. I had con-
“ templated the possibility of my falling; but I had
“ never once foreseen the horror of having my life
“ spared by such a villain. I would at the moment
“ sooner have died, and I tried to provoke him to
“ make use of his advantage by saying, that though
“ the manner of his success rendered it impossible

“ for me to pursue my design, it could not prevent
“ my thinking and speaking of him as he deserved.
“ ‘ You are young and inexperienced,’ said he,
“ ‘ but when you come to know the nature of women
“ as well as I do, you will think less of events that
“ are continually happening; I see, however, that
“ our friendship is at an end for the present, and so
“ I wish you a good day.’ Saying this, he threw
“ the swords down on the turf, and left me, wonder-
“ ing at the union of such self-possession and villany,
“ and cursing his dissembled skill, which had thrown
“ me into so mortifying a predicament.

“ Thus compelled to relinquish my hostile design
“ against this accomplished villain, I returned, mor-
“ tified and wretched, to Devonshire. The wound
“ I had received, though not dangerous, became
“ troublesome from want of attention: the blood
“ soon ceased to flow, and I thought no more of it;
“ but, by the time I arrived at Exeter, it gave me
“ considerable pain, and I stopped at Mr. Rundle’s
“ to have it examined and dressed. I candidly told
“ him how I had received it, and he advised me to
“ allow him to make it public. ‘ Your father,’ said
“ he, ‘ will reprove you, I have no doubt, and the
“ duel will probably be condemned by many of your
“ friends, who reason justly on the practice of duel-
“ ling; but it will not be difficult to make a dis-
“ tinction in your favour, and the happiest and
“ clearest inferences against the report spread by
“ Mrs. Grimwood will be the result, as the absur-
“ dity of your fighting in such a case, were it true,
“ is self-evident, so that you will stand completely
“ acquitted of the slanderous charge.’

“ Convinced of the justness of this observation,
“ I consented that he should mention it to my fa-
“ ther, and take his opinion. ‘ It is a great pity,’
“ said Rundle, ‘ that you failed to extirpate the

“villain whose existence will but multiply ruin and
“wretchedness. Poor Mr. Nevill is distracted—’
“—‘ Good Heaven!’ exclaimed I, ‘ does he know
“the fact?’—‘ It was impossible,’ replied Rundle,
“‘ to keep him ignorant of it; for, besides the hor-
“ror and distress that announced something dread-
“ful to be revealed, Miss Nevill herself resolved to
“make it known to him. In vain did her mother
“soothe and dissuade her; she said that she had a
“hope, confirmed by her sensations, that her crime
“had produced the instrument of her death, but
“that the torture of dissimulation was not to be
“borne; that while she fondly imagined a speedy
“reparation, she had, from various motives, sup-
“ported her anguish in silence; but now all hope of
“that had forsaken her, and she would dissemble
“no longer; she could no longer endure it. When
“she had thoroughly recovered her senses, her
“countenance displayed such a fixed and settled
“despair, that her mother was afraid to leave her,
“and as I called on my return to Affington-house,
“requested me to remain till Mr. Nevill came in.

“‘ I will not attempt,’ continued Rundle, ‘ to
“describe to you the scene that took place. Ex-
“Mount, where, so long, order and happiness had
“reigned, was all confusion and misery. Convinced
“that it would be a fruitless attempt to keep her
“husband in ignorance, Mrs. Nevill undertook
“to disclose to him Montague’s villany. I shall
“never forget his countenance, when after a consi-
“derable circumlocution, she awakened in his mind
“the idea of his daughter’s ruin. When she only
“talked of his desertion of her, he said it had been
“too evident to surprise him; and thanked God that
“his Sophy had escaped so fickle a man: but when
“after requesting him affectionately to prepare his
“mind for a dreadful shock, she said that the vil-

“lain had betrayed her innocence, he turned pale,
“and asked, with a quivering lip, what she meant.
“She answered him with tears. He swore it could
“not be; asked for his daughter, and in the same
“breath declared he would never see her; cursed
“Montague, denounced his vengeance upon him;
“then said again, it could not be, and demanded
“proof.

““In the midst of his agitation Miss Nevill’s maid
“came to call Mrs. Nevill, who ran out of the par-
“lour. Mr. Nevill had scarcely time to ask me
“what I knew on the subject, when the girl returned
“for me: I could only beg him to be patient, and
“hastened up stairs, where I deprived his unhappy
“daughter of the instrument she had relied upon
“for death.

““While I was attending her in her bed-chamber,
“her father’s step was heard in the next room,
“whither Mrs. Nevill ran to stop him. Poor man!
“being alarmed by her information, he sent her in
“again, and standing concealed by the door, which
“he held ajar, called to his child in a gentle and
“plaintive voice, that bespoke the agony of the con-
“flict in his soul, ‘Sophy, my dear Sophy, I love
“you very dearly; live, I charge you live, and I will
“forgive you all.’ He then drew the door to softly,
“and was heard no more. His gentle charge and
“fond promise of forgiveness had a different effect
“from what his solicitude intended. The sound of
“his voice produced a tremour in my patient of
“which the consequences at such a time was to be
“dreaded. I was, however, fortunate enough, by
“the means of opiates, to give nature time to do
“her work, and I hope her life is not in danger;
“yet there is no answering, for it is wonderful how
“the vital functions are clogged and deranged by
“the working of ideas. She has not seen her fa-

“ther, nor does he now seem inclined to see her;
“for his mild solicitude was but the transient effect
“of her danger: with her safety his disgust and
“horror returned. Her chief, indeed I may say all,
“her danger, depends on mental causes; for her
“constitution is good, and able to surmount the
“shocks it has sustained, if imagination could be
“kept quiet.’

“Mr. Rundle having dressed my wound and promised to call on my father in the afternoon, I resolved to defer my visit to my friends near Chudleigh, and to go and stay at Ex-Mount till he had been at Affington. I had no hope of seeing Sophia, but I knew that both Mr. and Mrs. Nevill considered me as one of their family, and would no more exclude me from their sorrows than from their joys. When I rang at the gate I was informed, that all the family, except Mrs. Nevill and Sophia, had left the house. I went in, at the same time desiring that Mrs. Nevill might not be called to me, as I was at leisure, and meant to stay. I was afraid lest my being at Ex-Mount should be mentioned in Sophia’s hearing; but there was no occasion for my apprehension, as she was kept dosing, and every precaution observed.

“Mrs. Nevill, informed by Mary of my arrival, soon joined me. With tears she repeated what Rundle had told me, and added that Mr. Nevill was so distracted that he had not been able to resolve on the conduct to be pursued: that he had sent his other children to his sister in Somersetshire, and had himself gone the evening before to Affington-house, where he purposed to take a bed for some nights. I said every thing I could to console this amiable woman, who passed the rest of the day between nursing her daughter and conversing with me on the misery entailed on our fa-

“ milies by the miscreant with whom we were once so
“ charmed.

“ In the evening Rundle came to Ex-Mount, after
“ having been at Affington, and informed me that
“ my father had gone out early in the morning with
“ Mr. Nevill, and was not expected back that night ;
“ that he had not scrupled to communicate to my
“ mother my meeting with Montague, which had
“ made her very uneasy, and at the same time, very
“ anxious to see me. He promised to pay me a visit
“ early next day, and I hastened home.

“ My mother was not only hurt at the precipitan-
“ cy with which I had acted, but the knowledge of
“ it had awakened in her mind a suspicion that Mr.
“ Nevill had induced my father to accompany him
“ on a similar design. A melancholy presage in-
“ creased the gloom already spread, through the
“ house, and the whole of the next day was passed
“ in great anxiety, which, as the evening advanced,
“ grew more and more painful, for my father had not
“ said that he should be absent more than one night.
“ My mother at last became extremely agitated, and
“ sent me to Ex-Mount and to Exeter to make en-
“ quiries. I was afraid to raise the idea in the town,
“ and Rundle, whom I consulted, was of opinion
“ that there were no grounds for my mother’s fears,
“ being confident, from my father’s known princi-
“ ples, that he would not engage in a duel, or take any
“ step that should countenance the practice. I was
“ myself satisfied with this conclusion, and was about
“ to return home, when it occurred to me that a let-
“ ter might be lying at the post-office to be deliver-
“ ed in the morning. I was right in my conjecture ;
“ on my applying I found a letter for my mother,
“ but the post-mark showing the route of the writer
“ to be directly towards the point dreaded, my ap-
“ prehensions returned, and I hesitated whether to

“ give it or not. I recollected, however, that though
“ I had mentioned to my father where Montague
“ was, my mother was not present at the time ; I
“ therefore delivered it, and had the satisfaction to
“ find that it tranquillized her and Louisa. It mere-
“ ly stated, that in the hope of alleviating the afflic-
“ tion of his friend he should not quit him at present,
“ and requested my mother not to be uneasy if they
“ did not return so soon as she expected. I tried
“ by my manner to confirm the security renewed by
“ the letter, but to me the interval was awful be-
“ tween this and the next, which arrived a few days
“ after, dated at Salisbury. I have it in this collec-
“ tion, and you shall read it.” Here Jones gave me
the letter, which was as follows :

“ My dear Louisa,

“ From the situation of my friend Nevill,
“ it will not be in my power to return to Affington
“ for a week or ten days, or perhaps longer. I can-
“ not, meanwhile, reconcile it to my mind to leave
“ you ignorant of the real cause of our absence, how-
“ ever painful it is to acknowledge that I have acted
“ contrary to my principles. Whenever man takes
“ revenge into his own hands, instead of repairing
“ or diminishing the injury he has received, he sel-
“ dom fails to deepen and enlarge it. In vain did I
“ argue with Nevill, to divert him from the resolu-
“ tion he had formed, of putting to death the villain
“ who had robbed his life of all its relish ; the injury
“ had so inflamed his mind, and clouded his reason,
“ that he saw no medium between that and the still
“ more horrid crime of suicide. Happiness, he said,
“ was out of the question ; that was gone, to return
“ no more, but he could never be resigned to life,
“ he could never endure it, till he had uncased the

“demon of the fair form he had taken ; or, at least,
“till he had attempted it. In hopes of turning him
“from his purpose, and, at all events, believing I
“chose the less evil, I consented to accompany him
“in search of Mr. Montague. Finding his resolu-
“tion unalterable, I resolved to make solemn terms
“with Nevill. I might have prevented the duel,
“indeed, by application to a magistrate, but I
“should probably by such a step have accelerated
“the alternative I dreaded ; I therefore consented
“to accompany him into the field on a sacred pro-
“mise that he would never attempt his own life, or
“yield a second time to the irrational impulse that
“guided him to punish with his own hand. Monta-
“gue was still at Mr. Bettesworth’s where John told
“me he was, and where I am sorry to say I find that
“he lately saw him. John’s conduct was rash, and
“what I did not expect of him, nor shall I allow him
“to extenuate his by mine, for the motives and
“the cases altogether are very different ; but I shall
“reserve what I have to say on the subject till I see
“him. At first Montague endeavoured to evade
“Nevill’s challenge by sending a person, whom he
“calls his friend, to *reason* with him. Nevill would
“not suffer him even to speak, but lavished the
“most opprobrious terms on the man whose friend
“he professed to be, adding that he was not sur-
“prised to find cowardice linked to villany. The
“young man, whose name, I have since learned, is
“Dorant, shrugged his shoulders and withdrew, say-
“ing, he undertook to show that Mr. Montague
“was no coward. In less than an hour he returned
“commissioned to settle the time and place of
“meeting. He left every thing to Nevill himself
“but one point, and that was the place, which he
“thought should be at a distance from Mr. Bettes-
“worth’s, and he mentioned a secluded spot near Sa-

“bury. To this, the distance being but eight miles
“farther, Nevill, though provoked at delaying his
“vengeance an instant, agreed, saying that he
“should be there with a case of pistols in less than
“two hours, and hoped before he slept to shoot the
“monster. We immediately ordered the chaise,
“and drove to Salisbury, where, leaving Nevill to
“engage apartments, I went in search of my old
“acquaintance, Ruthven, whose skill as a surgeon
“I well knew. Having secured his attendance, I
“returned to my distracted friend, whom I accom-
“panied to the place appointed. We had not waited
“long, when a chaise stopped at a little distance, and
“Dorant, leaving it, came up to us alone. He said
“that Mr. Montague had more fully explained to
“him the cause of Mr. Nevill’s challenge, and that,
“on reflection, he was resolved not to meet him.
“‘Curse the coward!’ cried Nevill. Dorant en-
“treated to be heard. Nevill, declaring with an
“oath that he would listen to no palliative from
“such an abandoned villain, referred the gentleman
“to me, and sullenly walked away. Having attended
“to what Dorant had to say, which consisted mere-
“ly in expressing his sorrow for the result of what
“he called his friend’s amour, and in stating the im-
“possibility of his meeting the father of the lady, I
“inveighed bitterly against the conduct of the per-
“son whom he called his friend; to which he made
“no reply but by shrugs of the shoulders, and occa-
“sionally repeating, ‘that is according to circum-
“stances.’ I was still talking, when Dorant,
“observing the chaise go off at a very brisk rate,
“expressed his surprise. I looked round for Nevill,
“but he was out of sight. I asked if Montague
“was in the carriage. He replied, no; but waiting
“for him at Salisbury, which they meant to leave
“together, the instant he returned to the inn. I

“ expressed an apprehension that Nevill was gone
“ to find his enemy, and that some mischief would
“ publicly ensue; on which we walked, or rather
“ ran, towards the town. I was right in my con-
“ jecture: we arrived too late. Nevill had told the
“ postboy, who was ignorant of the intended meet-
“ ing, that it was necessary he should be in the town
“ without delay; and had paid him beforehand for
“ expedition. Concealing his pistols, he desired to
“ be shown into the room where Montague was,
“ and locking the door, on perceiving him, placed
“ one of his pistols upon a table, telling him that he
“ would give him time to take it up, but that if he
“ hesitated, he would shoot him without farther ce-
“ remony. Driven to this alternative, the villain
“ took up the pistol: they fired nearly at the same
“ instant, and were both wounded. This I was told by
“ Nevill, whom I found in the arms of Ruthven, who
“ had removed him to our inn, which Montague had
“ purposely avoided. The latter, being slightly
“ hurt, has found means to escape: but our unfor-
“ tunate friend is seriously, if not mortally, wounded.
“ The ball struck him on the outer part of the chest,
“ towards the right shoulder, where it lodged, and
“ has not yet been extracted. He suffers much
“ pain, and cannot be removed. Ruthven does not
“ think his life in danger, but fears that it will not be
“ possible to come at the ball; consequently that
“ the cure will never be perfect. Such is the result
“ of duelling, in which the cause of justice and real
“ honour is always liable to be sacrificed; and by
“ which injuries may be heightened, but can never
“ be redressed. Poor Nevill, however, endures
“ bodily pain with great patience; but he almost
“ raves when he speaks of the wretched man who
“ has ruined his peace; and never mentions his
“ daughter without tears. As an account of this af-

“ fair will probably get into the public papers, I advise you, my dear Louisa, to see Mrs. Nevill, and break the matter to her as tenderly as possible. You may assure her, that her husband is not in immediate danger, and say that I hope we shall be able, in a few days, to travel homeward. I beg you will yourself be perfectly easy as to our future conduct; for Nevill has assured me that he feels himself bound to a rigid observance of his promise, in return for the sacrifice I made to him of my opinion to friendship. Remember me most affectionately to John and Louisa. Tell John that the more I love him, the longer shall I be in recovering the shock I received on being told by Mr. Dorant that he had encountered Montague: not even the reflection that it is a full proof of his innocence of the crime laid to his charge can reconcile me to the thought of his having so far forgotten all my instructions on this head as to plunge voluntarily into a crime, which not even the mandates of the idol Honour can justify, however it may occasionally be extenuated by circumstances. Adieu!

“ Yours most affectionately,

“ J. J.”

“ It is needless,” said Jones, resuming his narrative, “ to dwell circumstantially on all the effects of Montague’s villany; I shall briefly relate what occurred after this, and hasten to what more immediately concerns me at present. The contents of this letter, though they shocked, relieved my mother, and she communicated them in such a manner to Mrs. Nevill as to spare her much distress. My father and Mr. Nevill were absent nearly a fortnight; during which I understood from Rundle, that Sophia made little progress towards recovery,

“and that he was obliged to keep her under the
“dominion of opiates.

“I went daily to Ex-Mount, where, instead of
“consoling Mrs. Nevill, I wept with her. The
“house seemed deserted: the children were gone
“with one of the maids to another county; the mas-
“ter of the house with his valet was absent; the
“coachman, unemployed, sauntered at the stable
“door; the other servants, scarcely ever called upon,
“sat listless, or working silently at their needle in
“the kitchen at a distance; Mrs. Nevill and Mary
“attended to Sophia; silence reigned throughout
“the house, the regular ticking of the clock in the
“hall was the loudest sound to be heard. One
“morning when I called at the usual hour, I was
“informed that Mrs. Nevill had a violent head-ach,
“and was lying down in her own room. After sit-
“ting alone a considerable time in the parlour, re-
“flecting on the great alteration in the appearance
“of Ex-Mount, and on the occurrences that had
“gradually led to it, I felt a desire to see Mary, that
“I might enquire for Sophia, and talk of her with
“that faithful girl. I did not like to ring the bell:
“I conceived the idea of stealing softly up-stairs
“myself, and of drawing Mary from Sophia’s cham-
“ber, by the gentle noise I should make as I moved
“in her study.

“Treading with caution, I could not help stop-
“ping on the broad staircase to contemplate the
“awful silence of the place, contrasted with the
“accustomed life and gaiety that constantly de-
“lighted the eye and the ear, communicating spirits
“to the happy inhabitants and all their visitors: no do-
“mestics were moving about, no children skipping
“or dancing, no sprightly talk, no social laugh was
“heard; no voice nor instrument echoed through
“the mansion; all was mute and still—all struck

“ dumb—Great God! all struck dumb by a base,
“ diabolical act of villany, to obtain a mean and
“ transient gratification!

“ With a full heart I went on to the little study—I
“ turned the lock gently—Oh! how shall I tell it you!
“ The tears that had risen to my eyes on the stairs
“ now streamed down my cheeks—Conceive what
“ my heart, prepared as it was, felt when, opening
“ the door, I saw Sophia, lying at full length on a
“ couch, pale, emaciated, her eyes closed, a bandage
“ round her head, a quilt thrown lightly over her
“ person. She appeared dosing; she would have
“ appeared dead, but that I heard her gently breathe.
“ How slight was the sensation I felt on the stairs,
“ compared to the agony I now endured. Mary
“ was absent. I stood motionless, my hands clasp-
“ ed, my tears flowing, gazing in a transport of
“ grief on the injured angel. The features so much
“ admired were before me, and they were still lovely
“ in their ruin; but where was the bloom of health,
“ the firm and rosy cheek, the habitual smile indicat-
“ ing peace and innocence? Faded—gone—blasted!
“ Great God! blasted by a villain for a mean and
“ transient gratification! Heaven and earth! is it in
“ the nature of man to sacrifice virtue and loveliness
“ to the depravity of his passions! to immolate an-
“ gels at the shrine of brutality!

“ While these reflections were rising in my tortur-
“ ed mind, Sophia opened her eyes. I stood unable
“ to move. She looked at me for some time without
“ seeming to perceive me. At last she raised her
“ head, from the pillow, placed her hand to her
“ forehead to screen her eyes from the light, con-
“ tracted them, and kept them steadfastly on me,
“ attempting to ascertain the reality of their percep-
“ tion; but, as if unable to succeed in the attempt,
“ she quietly shut her eyes again, and sunk back to

“ her former posture. I remained gazing at her for
“ several minutes : I was once going to speak, but,
“ persuaded that she was not in a state to attend to
“ me, and dreading the consequence, I checked my-
“ self, and resolved to retire unobserved. After I
“ went out, I opened the door again, to look at her
“ once more—alas ! it was for the last time—I have
“ never seen her since : she lay in the same position.
“ It was with the utmost difficulty I tore myself
“ away, nor could I till, with a fervency I never felt
“ before, I had prayed that she might be restored to
“ health and tranquillity.

“ I left the house unseen, my heart sinking under
“ the weight of its affliction. Sophia was, if possi-
“ ble, more dear to me than ever. I did not reason
“ like the world ; I could not follow the judgment
“ of my father. I saw her mind uncontaminated by
“ guilt, though it had been influenced by terrour ;
“ nay, the injury she had received had been the
“ means of setting her love of virtue in a stronger
“ light in my eyes ; for I had witnessed the agita-
“ tions of her soul, and had seen their deplorable
“ effects upon her person. The state in which I had
“ just beheld her produced new, though melancholy
“ feelings, which, uniting with the passion she had
“ so early inspired, rendered her even more interest-
“ ing to my heart than in her days of health, beauty,
“ and uninjured innocence. Then, I could have re-
“ signed her to the superior prospects fondly imagined
“ by her father ; but now, fallen, abused, fading in
“ sickness, the hand of death perhaps already upon
“ her, I felt my heart cleave inseparably to her, even
“ to the wish of participating her grave. Oh, Mor-
“ land ! Morland ! why are we thus formed ! why is
“ the soul of man, in its purest moments, in its best
“ affections, exposed to the rack of sensibility ?”

Jones spoke very warmly, and his question was the effect of emotion : it required no answer but tears ; a reply, which the picture he had drawn anticipated. He felt a relief in my sympathy, and continued his story.

“ When I called the next day,” said he, “ and saw
“ Mrs. Nevill, she asked me, if I had gone up stairs
“ the day before. I loved her too much to have any
“ reserve with her ; I owned I had, and I told her
“ my motive, and the effect the unexpected sight of
“ Sophia had had on me. Sophia had told her that she
“ was certain I had been in the room, but that she
“ had not the power of utterance when she saw me.
“ Mary, at the time, was making the bed in her
“ chamber.

“ The manner in which Mrs. Nevill mentioned
“ this circumstance, and the affection with which
“ she spoke to me, impelled me to open my whole
“ heart to her. I told her how I loved Sophia, de-
“ clared that the injury she had received made no
“ change in my love or esteem, and entreated her to
“ assist me in accomplishing my happiness. ‘ My dear
“ boy,’ said she, ‘ you know not what you ask. Had
“ we never seen this wicked man who has upset
“ all our happiness, nothing on earth could have
“ added so much to it, as to have called you my son,
“ to have seen you united to my girl ; but very, very
“ different are my feelings now. I love your father
“ and mother too well to encourage you in such a
“ thought, and even if they consented to your wish,
“ I should oppose it, for I love *you* too much to
“ allow it.’—‘ Oh, my dear Mrs. Nevill,’ cried I,
“ ‘ Sophia is amiable, Sophia is virtuous.’—‘ Yes,
“ John,’ replied she, ‘ my child *is* virtuous ; I know
“ every corner of her heart—’ here tears ‘choaked
“ her utterance for a few moments, when she added,

“—‘ and in the sight of God, I would stake my life
“ and all that is dear to me on her virtue ; but she
“ is lost to the world, and you, my dear John, shall
“ marry no woman who is not respected and received.’ I would have argued with her, but she would
“ not hear me, and compelled me to desist, by saying;
“ that, at all events, the time demanded different
“ thoughts.

“ The day after I had this conversation with Mrs.
“ Nevill, my father and Mr. Nevill returned.
“ Though able to travel without danger from his
“ wound, this afflicted father was by no means recovered : the ball had been found and extracted,
“ but the malady of his mind, uniting with that of
“ his body, had greatly altered his appearance. My
“ father talked fully to me on the subject of duelling—I will not repeat his conversation to you. It
“ was impossible to refute his arguments: a crime it
“ is, whether the result of a barbarous revenge, or of
“ a weak apprehension of the scorn of the fashionable world. He talked also of the wretched state
“ of Mr. Nevill’s mind, but he studiously avoided all
“ conversation respecting Sophia, which surprised
“ me, as I rather expected that he would say every
“ thing to deter me from thinking of her. In a short
“ time, however, the motive of this silence was explained. While Mr. Nevill was detained by his
“ wound at Salisbury, he advised with my father on
“ the conduct to be pursued with respect to his unhappy daughter, and they had agreed that it was
“ impossible to let her reside at Ex-Mount, or have
“ any communication with her sisters. In consequence of this decision, as soon as she could be
“ removed, Sophia was conveyed privately from her
“ father’s house, and the place of her banishment
“ has been ever since kept a profound secret.

“ We were informed of her removal, when it took place, by my father, who now expatiated on the necessity of separating her from the family, and of secluding her from the world, particularly her former acquaintance, as the only chance she had of recovering the slightest degree of tranquillity. He also seized the occasion to repeat and enforce his opinion on the propriety of her remaining single through life, as it was impossible that any man of nice feelings could, even for a moment, think of making her his wife. When I recovered from the shock given to my heart by the intelligence of the resolutions respecting Sophia, I warmly protested against submitting to the tyranny of the world: and said that between the crime of killing a villain in a duel, and that of sacrificing a virtuous woman who had been betrayed, and whose only error sprang from an anxiety to retain the appearance as well as the reality of virtue, I saw no difference that was not in favour of the former, for they were both crimes upheld by false opinions of honour; that to make no distinction between vice and error was to confound the ideas of justice, and that I could not but hope Mr. Nevill would recall the cruel resolution of banishing Sophia from his family before it completely broke her heart.

“ My father, with a dejected countenance, said he was sorry to hear me express such sentiments, for he could not call them arguments; that the opinion which sanctioned duelling was pregnant with mischief to society, whereas the opinion respecting the honour of women was one of the ramparts that secured the happiness of the worthier part of the community, and could not be too scrupulously supported, even though occasionally attended with hardship, as in the present case; that as for the

“cruelty of separating her from the family, it would
“be cruelty to the rest, and to herself, not to do it;
“for how could she hold up her head among them,
“or they look at her without the taint of recollection? That so far from being the means of breaking her heart, she had herself eagerly seized the
“hint, as the only hope that could be presented to
“her of its ever being healed sufficiently to make
“her tolerate life—‘and in this,’ said my father,
“‘she displayed her accustomed good sense, and
“I trust she will in time attain a serenity of mind
“that may, in the end, combine with a more solid
“happiness than is to be found in the good opinion
“of the world.’ The praise this sentence contained
“was soothing, and as I saw that I had given him
“pain, I resolved to desist opposing my opinion to
“his. I loved him better than myself, and I had
“long been convinced by all his actions and expressions, that no object was dearer to him than
“my welfare and happiness. This consideration,
“with the esteem and unbounded affection I bore
“him, wrought also in my mind a determination
“to endeavour to sacrifice every wish of my own to
“gratify his.

“After some time the family were again assembled
“at Ex-Mount, all but Sophia; and every exertion
“was made to restore cheerfulness and gaiety, for
“the sake of the younger children; but the attempt was awkward, and long unsuccessful, nor
“are the Nevills now what they were two years ago.
“Clara loved her sister too well to be happy without
“her; she was her friend; the two younger ones doated
“upon her; she was their instructress and their
“play-fellow. Ex-Mount recovered its usual round
“of company, and its usual festivities, but not its
“usual felicity: no wonder! its chief internal source
“of joy was stopped. Mrs. Nevill’s former habitual

“cheerfulness is poorly supplied by feigned gaiety,
“and Mr. Nevill conceals the brooding over his loss
“under the veil of ill health, which serves him as an
“excuse for the many solitary hours he spends in
“his study.

“It is now almost two years since the banishment
“of Sophia, and I have sincerely combated my
“passion: alas! more sincerely than successfully.
“Far from avoiding company, I have constantly
“sought it: but it has served more to confirm my
“admiration than to weaken my attachment; I find
“Sophia’s equal nowhere. My father has even
“hinted a wish that Clara Nevill were his daughter.
“I always loved Clara, and strove to form my heart
“to his wish; but I could do no more than love her
“as Sophia’s sister: that lively emotion which dis-
“tinguishes the passion of love from the sentiment
“of friendship, and with which I was so well ac-
“quainted, was wanting in my attachment to Clara,
“and in spite of my efforts always accompanied the
“idea of her sister. It had accompanied her image
“in health and in sickness, in hope and in despair, in
“the gaiety of conscious innocence, and in the hor-
“rours of violated virtue; in the hours of general ad-
“miration, and in those of desertion. Can a passion
“such as this be eradicated from the heart? It is
“in vain to try, Morland—my soul is wedded to
“her, and I would sooner make her my wife in the
“sad state in which I last beheld her, than marry
“any other woman actually possessing health, beau-
“ty, and fortune.

“Such is the termination of my honest endeavours
“to gratify my father: such is the secret that is
“preying on my soul, and on which I am precluded
“from conversing with him, my mother, or my sis-
“ter, and which I have been doomed to confine to
“my own bosom; for as to a friend, such a one as I

“ wanted, let me repeat it to you, I sought without finding. All the young men, whom I know, are constantly engaged in pursuing the common routine of pleasures, and are as unsuited to the sympathies of a wounded heart as to the comprehension of such a love as mine. Something at my heart, Morland, tells me that Providence has thrown us together to soothe mutually the pains of our existence. This may be deemed romantic; so are some virtues. It is true that we have had little trial of each other; but our situations, our sentiments, are an earnest of our sincerity, and I am persuaded that if I miss this opportunity of forming such a friendship as my imagination contemplates, I shall wait long before I find another.”

My mind was completely open to the impression of such a confidence as Jones had reposed in me; and the affecting manner in which he related his story, had melted my heart to that softness, which receives the deepest stamp, and at the same time fired it with that glow of virtue which renders the impression indelible. We embraced each other like two fond school-boys heedless of the distinctions of the world, and blind to events that were to overturn, on their quitting school, all the ardent plans of youthful enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XVII.

Friendship—An unexpected meeting shakes Jones's resolution—Sophia's letter—Morland's advice—He dines at Affington-house—Has two distinct views of the spires of Oxford—Interests Jones for Tom Murphy, and returns to Ben's cottage.

FRIENDSHIP is said to be a plant of slow growth, and perhaps few are of long duration that come not

gradually to perfection. It is engrafted upon wisdom, and fenced around with good sense and virtue; it owes the balmy qualities of its fruit to culture, its soil is improved and enriched with unremitting care, in time the insipidity of caution is mellowed into the sweetness of confidence, and the well-rooted standard defies the storms of life and the attacks of time. This species is rare as well as slow, and there are but few who are either able or willing to attend to its cultivation. On the other hand, nature is ever making spontaneous efforts to produce it every where, but the variety of soils, left to her alone, make an ungrateful return, and the plant, luxuriant at first, never arrives to sufficient strength to bear fruit, or yields only poison. There is, however, a species of rapid growth, which, placed by providence in a congenial soil, shoots up with all the luxuriancy of the latter, and with all the strength and balmy richness of the former. A turn of countenance, a smile, a sentiment produces it in the hearts of unguarded youth, and it flourishes speedily; but there is this difference between it and the friendship engrafted on wisdom; it is unfenced, and its branches stand in the current of the passions; it is liable to be blighted by folly and by vice. A few, perhaps very few, escape and shoot to a height, at which no current can affect them, where they become as durable as they are perfect, and are so far preferable to those of the cultured species, as they have been more productive.

The confidence Jones placed in me, and the tone of equality in which he spoke, not only gratified me, but called forth in my breast sensations half stifled by the degrading state to which I had fallen. I felt the pride of a gentleman in being the friend of one, and even in this respect alone, in looking back, I always consider our meeting in the alcove at Affington as one of the evidently providential events of my life.

Be this as it may, let us return to the thread of my narrative.

Jones had with a religious sincerity combated his passion, and if he had not eradicated it from his heart, he had at least recovered that equanimity which prevented its preying on his spirits or injuring his health, and which enabled him to convince his father that filial affection was as strongly rooted in his mind as any of its emotions. Many months had passed since the departure of the object of his passion, and though his love remained unabated, he was heroically practising a conduct that might truly be called virtuous, when an unexpected incident threw him off his poise, and gave to his passion a degree of ardour higher if possible than ever.

He was one morning, in the latter end of March preceding my arrival in Devonshire, riding, followed by a servant, on the Newton road, and had got as far as Hall-down, where he proceeded slowly, contemplating the Heaton rocks which appeared on the hills to his right, when his attention was called off from those objects by a distant scream that directed his eyes to a post-chaise on the road where he observed one of the horses fallen on the ground and the boy under him. He immediately spurred on to give assistance: as he went up a terrified female, having opened the door, sprung out of the carriage. The post-boy was soon extricated from his dangerous position, and the stumbling horse put upon his legs, but how was Jones surprised, when going up to the traveller he recognized in her Sophia's maid Mary. The inevitable associations of past hours accompanied the sight of this faithful and respectable young woman; Sophia in all her charms, Sophia in all her sufferings, presented her image as strongly as ever to the mind of her lover. I will not relate minutely the account of this unexpected interview

as described by Jones, suffice it to say that his anxiety to obtain intelligence of Sophia led him to ask a thousand questions to little purpose, for the sum of all he could prevail upon Mary to impart was, that she was well, and, if not happy, satisfied with her situation. When he asked her if she was still with Sophia, she answered, "No:" but her look and hesitation betrayed the truth. He saw, however, the propriety of her conduct in her attempts to preserve the secret with which she had been entrusted, and desisted from urging her to reveal it, resolving at the same time to keep the chaise in sight, in order to trace if possible the retreat of her mistress, whose image now banished all other ideas from his mind.

On putting her into the carriage he observed a number of boxes, with one of which he was well acquainted, and, pointing it out to her, desired her to tell Sophia that he hoped she had not forgotten him. She replied only by asking how far it was to Exeter, and, being informed, assured him of her respect, and with her eyes full of tears bade the post-boy make the best of his way. The boy, to make amends for his lost time, and to be revenged on the stumbling horse, set off at full speed, and Jones turned to mount: but neither horse nor servant was near him. The spirited animals being left to themselves, while their riders were engaged in assisting the post-boy, had become impatient of standing still, and began to walk forward; the servant perceiving it, crept cautiously up to his own, and caught his bridle suddenly, which startled the other and set him off on a gallop; the man instantly mounted and rode after him, and Jones, left on the down by himself, saw his horses and the chaise flying in opposite directions. He kept his eyes on the latter for a long way over the down, now and then turning to see if his servant was coming. At length the chaise reaching

the brow of the hill began to descend, and was soon out of sight. For some time he remained on the spot where he was left, gradually losing his patience, which was nearly exhausted when he perceived his man at a distance galloping towards him leading his horse. Satisfied that Mary had not a mile the start of him, he now recovered himself, being certain that he could overtake her with great ease in the course of eight miles, which was the distance to Exeter. Though he rode with all the speed he could, and though there were many hills to retard wheels and give a horseman additional advantage in the pursuit, he arrived at Affington without once getting a glimpse of his object. His servant enquired of several persons in the village, but no one had noticed its passing. He now conceived that he should hear of Mary at Ex-Mount, and he hastened on. The enquiry was as vain as it had been at Affington: the servant who came to the gate assured him that neither he nor any of his fellow servants knew any thing of her. He pushed on, he might yet overtake her before she reached Exeter. Every inn at Exeter was explored, but Mary was not found, nor was the chaise in which she had rode to be heard of.

Compelled to abandon the pursuit, Jones returned home; but not the same Jones he had gone out. The sight of Mary had renewed his former trains of thought, and in spite of his virtues he found himself doomed to be miserable without Sophia. He had all to do over again; again to combat with the strongest emotions of the heart, and those too in alliance with real virtue. From Mary's travelling in a post-chaise towards Exeter with luggage, he conceived Sophia to be in the neighbourhood: the thought haunted his imagination, and raised a desire to see her, more powerful than he had ever felt before. I have already said that his passions were strong,

and that he at times yielded to their influence. The fruitless search after the chaise at Exeter had consumed the greater part of the day, and it was too late to extend the enquiry back to Newton that evening; the next morning, however, he rose early and rode over—Newton is about twelve miles from Afington,—he might as well have staid at home: none of the stable-boys in the town knew any thing of the chaise described, or of the boy that drove it. From this time Jones retired as often as he could with propriety to his study, where he sat lost in reverie: his spirits before his family were the effect of painful effort, nor did he always make that effort when with his sister only. She perceived the change, and she asked his confidence; but this the nature of his sentiments forbade; she had been taught to consider Sophia's misfortune as a crime, and Jones would sooner have died than have attempted to counteract principles instilled into his sister's mind by his father and mother. His soul laboured under its feelings: he sought once to relieve it by communicating his thoughts to a young man whom he numbered among his friends, and accounted the most worthy of his confidence. On mentioning Sophia to him, however, the youth gave loose to such indecent observations and sentiments, that Jones's temper was ruffled, and, breaking away abruptly, he resolved in future to confine those unhappy feelings to his own breast. This happened a day or two before I first went to Afington-house, and assisted to prepare that sympathy on the subject of friendship, to which his father's praise and my own sentiments gave effect.

A few days after his father set out on his journey Jones again unexpectedly met Mary in Exeter, nearly three months after their meeting on Hall-down. He now resolved to discover Sophia's retreat, or at least to inform her by her maid, that it

was the invariable object of his mind, and that he should not be satisfied till he had succeeded. Mary listened to him with respect, and a look of concern that proved her interested in his behalf; and when he had done speaking, said that she had a message to deliver to him from her mistress. She then told him that Sophia on hearing of their former meeting had charged her to avoid him; but if he met her, and endeavoured to obtain information of the place of her residence, to request him in her name to desist, and to assure him that she would herself write to him on the subject. A letter from Sophia was a gratification only inferior to that of seeing her, and the promise of it produced an immediate acquiescence. In consequence he received the one I found for him in the alcove, of which the following is a copy.

“ My dear friend,

“ I depend upon the good sense and virtues which
“ I know you possess for the effect I propose in writing to you. Too well convinced by the report I received from my maid, after your accidental meeting on Hall-down, that you continue to think of me in a manner injurious to your own happiness, and destructive to the repose, which my mind, after a dreadful agitation of many bitter months, is beginning to recover, I immediately resolved to treat you with that plainness and candour due to one of such exalted principles, and I instructed Mary to inform you, if you met her again, that I would write to you.

“ We were infants together, play-fellows in the early part of youth, and friends as we advanced in life; in retracing our lives, I do not remember a single circumstance that throws the slightest spot upon yours, but on the contrary, many, many that

“ highly exalt you in my opinion : not only your virtues secured my esteem, your manners won my affection, and, to descend to your person, I admired your countenance and form, as worthy of the mind they contained: to have known myself selected by you, would have completed that attachment which I should have gloried to confess. Let the sincerity of this avowal prove to you the unalterable determination of my soul, which has been the result of reflection on the degraded state into which I have fallen. I am resolved never to marry. Think not to shake my resolution : if any thing could confirm it more than the principle on which it is taken, it would be your persisting to think of losing yourself, and mortifying your family, the remembrance of whom is dear to me beyond expression, by a union that never can take place, and which if it did, would lead to misery. Reflection would embitter the remainder of my life, which I have now a prospect of spending tranquilly and rationally; and the idea of your delighting in a form that has been dishonoured, so far from gratifying a warrantable pride, could not fail to diminish my esteem, and, consequently, to cut off the chief source of happiness. But let me be more explicit; I have no longer a heart to exchange with you: mine is engaged; it is most firmly, most fervently fixed upon an object from whom I would rather die than remove it; the only being that could have reconciled me to myself. Yes, my friend, I am almost, if not altogether, reconciled to myself; and would you put an end to the reconciliation? Would you destroy, would you weaken a foundation, on which I have begun to build a new felicity, which promises to exceed, far exceed that which I lost? If so, examine into the nature of your love, and you will find it, how-

“ ever different the channel it takes, arising in the
“ same source as that which cruelly swept away the
“ happiness of my family. That kind of love, and
“ that only, I have abjured. The tender friendship
“ I felt for you, previous to the excursion of your
“ family through England, remains undiminished.
“ So will I love you as long as I live ; so I beseech
“ you to love me. I have a secret wish at my heart,
“ but it is of so delicate a nature that I know not
“ how to express it. I will venture, however, to
“ tell you, that it relates to your marrying ; but
“ not simply to your marrying—I must leave the
“ rest to Providence, who directs all things for the
“ best—at least, before I say more upon the subject,
“ I will reflect more upon it.

“ The self-reconciliation I speak of requires,
“ perhaps, some explanation. Do not imagine that
“ time or circumstances have taught me to think
“ more lightly of my transgression ; or, that I have
“ easily absolved it : no, I shudder with abhorrence
“ at the recollection ; and I never shall pardon it ;
“ but I have been taught by a friend—Oh, such a
“ friend !—to know myself, to know the real na-
“ ture of my offence, and to apply the only remedy
“ that could cure the distraction of my soul. It
“ will, I know, be a satisfaction to you to learn
“ what happened to me after I left Ex-Mount,
“ and the progress of the recovery of my health,
“ as well as of the tranquillity of my mind ; I shall
“ hold myself bound to give you the account ;
“ meanwhile, I intreat you to confirm my esteem,
“ by adopting the virtuous resolution of subduing,
“ in your attachment to me, all passion, all degree
“ of that kind of love, which it is not, which it
“ never will be in my power to return. Do not seek
“ me out : hereafter I will seek you. The time
“ will come when I shall be able to meet you

“ with propriety. You may even hasten it by your
“ conduct, in respecting the resolution I have taken,
“ and in preparing your mind for the enjoyment of
“ a friendship, pure and exalted above the reach
“ of passion. When I am convinced that you are
“ the master, not the slave, of yours, I shall be
“ anxious to press you to my heart as a brother,
“ and to introduce you to the friend, to whom I
“ have alluded in this letter. In whatever part
“ of England I may reside, you will be welcome
“ to our abode, and your correspondence will
“ form one of the greatest enjoyments of my ex-
“ istence. This, I am confident, cannot be effect-
“ ed immediately, therefore I will candidly inform
“ you, that peculiar circumstances have brought
“ me into Devonshire, at present, but that it is
“ not probable we should meet, and certainly not
“ with my consent, for some time to come. That
“ you should again meet Mary is more probable;
“ you cannot, however, except by making her un-
“ faithful, obtain through her the knowledge of
“ my present place of residence, which I am
“ very desirous should remain concealed. I am
“ persuaded that this is sufficient to prevent your
“ asking her any question about it, should you see
“ her again; and I will now conclude with assur-
“ ing you of my unabated esteem, and sincere af-
“ fection. I pray God to bless you, and all the
“ dear inhabitants of Affington-house; and I re-
“ main

“ Your ever attached friend,

“ SOPHIA.”

- This letter was left at Affington-house, on the evening previous to the day I met Jones; and had produced on his mind a very different effect to that intended by the writer of it. Sophia's reso-

lution not to marry, her urging him to exalt his love into pure friendship, her injunction to him not to seek her, were absorbed in the vivid lights thrown by his imagination on those passages of her letter, which, contrary to her design, acted as new incentives to his passion. Her beautiful person restored to blooming health; her noble mind, conscious of virtue, recovering a dignified tranquillity, in defiance of calumny; her being near; and, above all, the infatuating reflection produced by her praise, and avowal of the attachment she would have gloried in, had he declared himself before she was persuaded that he was devoted to another, took such strong possession of his mind, that the arguments and persuasions in her letter, appeared to him but slight barriers opposed to the completion of his happiness. It was not till he had consulted his pillow, and passed a sleepless night, that his reason, duty, and filial love, presented to him more formidable difficulties, and renewed in his breast the war of emotions. He had risen early after making himself miserable by meditating on the decided opinions expressed by his father: in the alcove he had again read Sophia's letter, and had there begun to be more forcibly struck with the parts adverse to his wishes. He found his father's prejudices supported by them, and he dreaded, more than at first, the *religious celibacy* which the combination of her resolution and sentiment manifested to be her intention. No reflection, however, could chase her from his heart, no heroic design of preferring the gratification of others to his own could relieve the oppression of his soul, and he declared that he was ready to sink into discontent and despondency.

It was impossible to peruse Miss Nevill's letter without estimating the great prize of which he

had been robbed, nor was I inclined to think it altogether past recovery. Delighted with Jones, I gave way freely to my sentiments, which were congenial with his. Far from condemning Miss Nevill's calamity as a crime, I paid a just tribute to her virtue, while I lamented the error into which she had been driven by the influence of fear, and the pardonable anxiety to save her family from disgrace and wretchedness: but I thought it necessary, at the same time to endeavour to fix him in the resolution of obtaining a noble triumph over his passion, if the object of it proved ultimately unattainable but by sacrificing the happiness of others. Jones's temperament was ardent: he listened to me with an acquiescence mixed with impatient ejaculations; it was the submission to an agonizing operation by a patient whose reason had before suggested it, but whom nature doomed to suffer extreme anguish. Poor fellow! as I stated principles long his own, he reclined his head upon his hand, his heart beat violently, and every line of his face marked the agitation of his soul. When I had spoken what I thought friendship demanded; "I knew," said he, "that your sentiments must be what you have expressed, and your candid expression of them is a proof of the incorruptible sincerity of your mind."—"Without truth," replied I, "there can be no friendship; but it is the part of a friend to soften painful truths, and while to deserve your esteem I am compelled to incite you to the exercise of virtues which seem to oppose your happiness, I should be deficient in the most pleasing task of friendship if I did not endeavour to reconcile them."—"Is it possible?" cried Jones, eagerly; "how? how? tell me how, Morland."—"It appears to me," said I, "that Miss Nevill has herself afforded

“ you the means by that letter, so suited to convince the understanding and to move the heart. “ I would have you, on your father’s return, candidly avow to him the struggle you have been maintaining with your passion, and promise to continue it, if you should fail to engage him as an ally on the side of your feelings. Then relate the circumstances of the accidental meetings with Miss Nevill’s maid, and show him the letter. To a mind like Mr. Jones’s it cannot but present the strongest evidence of the superior virtue of this noble young lady ; and to such a heart the sentiments and resolutions it contains must speak with irresistible force. I should not be surprised if, instead of opposing your wishes, he should himself become a warm suitor in your favour. It is evident that Miss Nevill’s resolutions have not been lightly taken. She hints a wish that you should marry, which she would not do were there the slightest reserve in her own determinations. I think your greatest difficulty will lie with her, and that if it is ever conquered, it will be through your father.”

Jones’s countenance brightened as I spoke, and, his imagination magnifying the hope I had raised, he sprang forward and embraced me with an ardour only inferior to what he would have bestowed on his mistress. He thanked me again and again, and blessed God that he had at length found a friend. I participated the delight I had given, and said nothing to check it: it began but too soon of itself to subside. Ardent hope seldom exists long unaccompanied by fear. When his mind had dwelled some time on the grounds that supported the former ; when he had expatiated on his father’s good sense, benignity, and paternal fondness ; on the magnanimity, upmerited fate, and charms of Sophia ; and

when he had taken a view of the long settled friendship between her family and his, and painted the delightful prospect of the renovation of their mutual happiness by the return of a daughter so beloved and so deserving of love, he relapsed into the dread of those rooted prejudices by which the world was guided, and which had already acted so strongly on his father's mind. I took upon me to keep the preponderance on the side of hope, and with management I contrived to render him cheerful in spite of his suspense.

It is now time to return to what immediately relates to myself; but I wish it to be understood, that when I undertook to write these memoirs it was at the request of Jones, who, in the events of my life, not only saw much that was interesting, but a fund of moral example in the contrasted characters I had met with. In complying with his desire it was impossible for me not to dwell circumstantially and warmly on the parts which concern him: they in fact form the most pleasing recollections of my existence, and to have omitted or described them cursorily would have been to rob my story of its highest interest. I consider the day on which I called at Affington-house and converted the kind opinion which Jones had conceived of me into friendship, as the most propitious of my life. The morning was far advanced before he concluded his narrative, and the hour of dinner overtook us talking of Sophia and raising the flattering visions of hope. He found no difficulty in prevailing on me to dine with him: the cordial of his friendship had raised my pride to its natural pitch; arrogance was foreign to my heart, but I had not lost the feelings of a gentleman, which were peculiarly excited by the occurrence of the morning, and I sat down to table with Jones on the footing of a friend.

In our way to the dining-room we passed in the hall a young man of a square athletic make, who smiling made an obsequious bow to Jones, which the latter returned with a degree of formality. This he afterwards told me was Mr. Hewson, the person who filled the place of which I had been disappointed by the vicar of Holcomb's unseasonable wrath. "The man," said Jones, "is not without his good qualities, but he has a contracted mind; it does not possess a spark of liberality. My father finds no fault with him, but neither does he bestow any praise upon him: I believe he does his duty."

When the cloth was removed Jones introduced the subject of Broke-hall. "I am sure, Morland," said he, "that something will be done to obviate the necessity of your seeking such an asylum; in the mean time let me intreat you to suspend your intention. I know from your account this morning that you are not at a loss for money; but if that were the case I have plenty to spare. You may judge of Lady Broke's character by her conduct to Sophia. Although my father has thought proper to keep up visits with the family, I heartily despise them all, nor does he respect them." This speech brought me a little to myself. While my thoughts were intent on Jones's story, and on the means of effecting his happiness, I felt myself his friend, and my mind expanded with the feeling; but when they turned upon my own situation, I became more embarrassed than I was previous to our meeting in the morning. I said that I should be happy to owe to his father's influence any provision or employment which would enable me to escape a mortifying dependence, and that perhaps he would return to Afington before it was necessary for me to go to Broke-hall: but that some just mode of support must be adopted, and it had been the sole alternative

pointed out to me ; that Mr. Whitaker's commendation and Lady Broke's fancy had combined to soften my fate ; that if I went to Broke-hall it would not be as a menial, and that the vicar had even raised a hope that I might yet complete my education for the church, and find a provision in its service. " It is a hope," replied he, " that the Brokes " will never realize ; but the idea charms me, because I think it can be realized without them. " The completion of your studies at Oxford cannot " be very expensive : my father has some influence " with the Bishop of the diocese—your story alone " —I see through it—yes, my dear Morland, I see " through it—it shall, it shall be so." Oh ! how sweet to an unfortunate man is the enthusiasm of a generous mind resolved on serving him ! The service itself, when effected, is not so sweet. Jones completely charmed me ; I resigned myself to the delightful visions of his friendship, and I passed the remainder of the day with him, conversing on topics too interesting to be exhausted.

Nor did I forget my musician. I told Jones how I became acquainted with Murphy, mentioned his talents, and described the deplorable state to which he was reduced. Jones knew him by my description, having seen him more than once at Affington parsonage, and attending parade with the band. Being acquainted with the Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment, he readily undertook, at my request, to solicit his consent to Murphy's purchasing his discharge.

On my return, in the evening, to my cottage, my heart, elated with its unexpected happiness, poured itself out in gratitude to Providence for having bestowed upon me the greatest blessing in life : I was no longer alone on the earth. The great Being to whose impersonal presence I had fondly resorted

with the utmost stretch of my faculties, had vouchsafed to grant me the society of a mind like my own. Lost at Bath in swarms of my fellow-creatures and in the midst of superb edifices, I was led to a small tranquil village and an humble cottage to be presented by his hand to a friend. Yes! by his hand! which, in spite of the obscurity that envelopes it, I have too often traced in the course of my life to mistake.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The difficulty of condescension—The influence of friendship even in trifles—The Hut—Morland builds again with a finish of Corinthian columns—Murphy grateful—A chat with Mr. Rundie—The most powerful allies of beauty—Murphy advances—The extreme of happiness the brink of misery.

I ROSE early the following morning, and was finishing my bason of new milk and household bread, when Jones entered the cottage. He said he had not breakfasted, and Bridget, delighted with the unexpected visit, supplied him with a bowl similar to mine, which he eat with great relish. Nothing characterizes a noble mind more than a certain unconstrained, benignant behaviour to a man's inferiors and dependents; and it should seem, too, according to my observation of life, that nothing is more difficult to attain. Every word, every look of a proud man is calculated to increase the distance which fortune has placed between the rich and the poor; to annihilate spirit or excite rebellion. If there be any thing noble in this, it must be of a spurious nature, derived solely from external advantages. On the other hand, condescension ostentatiously displayed, or clumsily attempted by fits and starts, marks weakness, and begets contempt. These qualities form

common characters : but dignity and humility so blended into habit, as to flatter unaffectedly the feelings of nature without deserting the distinctions of society, excite love and attract the respect they never appear to demand. This mark of a noble and generous spirit is seen only in those who possess the real advantages of good sense and good nature, as well as the distinctions of fortune. From my earliest acquaintance with the Joneses I saw it in all of them in an eminent degree. There was nothing studied in their manners, no conscious intention of acting according to an adopted rule ; their benignity was as free and as natural as the use of their senses. Ben and Bridget felt in the presence of Jones deference mingled with pleasure, but no awe ; and the old man without ceremony entertained him with an account of his jest upon me the first day I saw him take his physic.

After our breakfast I took my friend up to my little room, and showed him the beauties of it through the window. I introduced to him my few companions, Mr. Locke, Dr. Watts, Mr. Guthrie, Seneca, and Horace, whom he immediately recognised as old acquaintance. I displayed my music, and amused him a few minutes with my lute. He was no practical musician, having never felt an ambition to excel in the art beyond the skill of accompanying his sister in simple songs on the flute ; but I found he had a just ear which led him to delight in the harmony of sounds, and he warmly praised Miss Jones's execution and voice, concluding his eulogium with assuring me that Sophia was superior to her in both. From the cottage we sallied to take a ramble round the country. In going through the church-yard, I carried Jones to the grave of William, whose story I had told him the preceding day, when I was giving him an account of myself in the alcove, on the bank

of the Ex. We joined in wishing that Amy would make her appearance, and in admiring the beautiful linden. I had formed the same wish, and bestowed the same admiration before, when I was a solitary being, like the linden : my sentiment and sensation were now heightened by the participation of a kindred spirit. I felt even in this slight enjoyment the influence of friendship, and, anticipating the charm of it in the future events of my life, I became intent on confirming the blessing by convincing Jones that I was worthy of his attachment. I conversed with him on subjects of science and literature, and I freely poured out the warm sentiments of my soul on religion and virtue. He seemed no less anxious for my esteem. We continued the greater part of the day in communicating to each other our observations on life and on books, and had it not been for the unfortunate position in which he stood with respect to Miss Nevill, we should have been truly happy.

In the course of our walk we approached the acclivity on which stood the concealed Hut of the beautiful cottager of whom I had accidentally caught a transient glimpse on a former ramble. The circumstance recurred to my mind, and I mentioned it to Jones. He knew nothing of the name of Alton, but the place he was well acquainted with. It belonged the year before to a shopkeeper of Exeter, and he was not aware that he had disposed of it. We walked round the paling till we came to a gate, from which the road widened a little as it proceeded on the side of the hill, but scarcely enough to permit two carriages to pass in some places without encroaching on the brush-wood on either side. The gate standing a-jar, Jones, without scruple, pushed it wide open, saying it was a pretty spot. The opening of the gate, however, gave us only a view of the back of the cottage, looking into a large court-

yard, containing the offices belonging to it. The house was formed in a right angle towards the river, one side being two stories high, and the other only one, for the conveniency of a lofty room; but the external height of both sides was the same. An old man was training the shoots of a cherry-tree that grew against the wall of one of the offices. Jones called to him, and asked if Mr. Roberts did not live there still. The man said no; that Mrs. Alton lived there, but that there was nobody at home. On hearing which, as Jones had praised the spot, I asked if we might look at the garden. The man said, "he did not know whether he should be doing right, as the ladies were so very particular; yet he could not see that there would be any harm in our going round; it was but a mite of a place, though zure it was pratty enow."

It was indeed a pleasant spot. From the end of the side which fronted the river, down to the water, ran a broad bed of shrubs. We entered on the lawn through a small green gate that opened with a latch. The turf, closely mown, bordered the bed, the front of which was planted with dwarf rose-trees. At the gate stood a sweet-briar uniting with a honey-suckle, near the middle was a very fine arbor-vitæ, and on the bank of the Ex a picturesque willow drooped its branches over the stream: the rest of the shrubbery was admirably disposed with flowering shrubs and trees, whose differing heights afforded a combined display of their foliage, and whose successive blossoms supplied brilliant colours and varied odours, from the opening of the spring to the shutting in of the winter. The whole extent of the ground before the house to the river was lawn, on which grew lilacs near the house: a narrow gravel walk skirted the bottom of the walls on both lines of the angle, terminating in a broad one at the back of the wing

opposite to that where we entered. This broad walk, edged on either side with flower-beds, led us by the side of the cottage, covered with vines, to a fine wall, on which were regularly trained several apricot, peach, greengage, and nectarine trees. The walk turning, continued along this wall, at the end of which was a clump of ever-greens on both sides. Here it narrowed into an alley, shaded by filbert-trees, which serpentine the extent of the ground till it came near the river, when the track continued open along a lilac hedge, and joined the broad gravel walk; which again proceeded in a straight line to the wall. The middle space was appropriated to the kitchen-garden and fruit-trees. The beds of vegetables were intersected by narrow walks, lined with espaliers, or by gooseberry and currant-trees; and standards of various apples, pears, plums, and cherries, grew here and there irregularly. The view of the opposite bank of the Ex, and of the country rising beyond it, was both sublime and beautiful. We admired every thing but the angular form of the house, and that we pardoned from observing that the cottage had originally consisted only of one side, and that the other had been added to it in the best manner the ground would allow.

As the gardener was unwilling to admit us into the house, we did not press it; but sitting on the bench under the willow, we did not fail to make particular inquiries concerning the inhabitants, who, he said, were a Mrs. Alton and her daughter, strangers in that part of the country. They had only come the last Lady-day to the Hut, but from whom they had taken it, or for how long, he did not know. They employed him to take care of the garden, and do out-of-door work, and kept a maid to cook and attend to the house, and another to wait on the ladies. They were the best ladies in the world, so

kind-hearted, so good, and so pious. They saw very little company, and seldom stirred abroad, except it was to do some good. When there was hard work to do, such as digging and the like, his mistress always allowed him to employ a stout labouring man, for he himself was not able to go through with so much as he had been a-used to. "Bless their hearts ! they consider everything in the right way," said the old man, as he concluded his account of the Altons. "Then may their hearts be blessed !" cried Jones : "and blessed be their hearts !" added I. "So when they return," said Jones, "tell them that two young men, strolling by their cottage, stopped to look at their garden, and blessed their hearts."—"Mayhap they may know you," said the gardener, "if so be you think proper to leave your name." This Jones made no scruple to do. "Laud, Sir !" exclaimed the old man, looking stedfastly at Jones, "be you the son of Squire Jones of Affington ? It be a long while sin I see you, but I should know that face from its likeness to the squire's. I hope he be well, Sir, and Madam and Miss." This led to a little conversation, by which Jones found that the old man had formerly received some services from his father, but had been since out of the country for many years, till about three years before, when having lost all his family, he threw himself upon Mr. Roberts, the late proprietor of the Hut, who, from losing, first his son, and then his wife, in this retreat, had forsaken it about a twelvemonth. That he had, nevertheless, continued to take care of the garden, and had been hired by Mrs. Alton, when she agreed with the gentleman who he heard had bought it from Mr. Roberts. He could not tell the name of the purchaser. He had passed but twice through Affington since his return, as he always went to Exeter, when sent on

business, in some market-boat. Jones gave him a crown, and desired him, whenever he went through Affington, to call and see his father.

We now pursued our walk, and, though more than five miles from home, took intricate paths, to explore picturesque scenes, and get a view of a fine cataract on the other side of the Ex. My friend was more proficient in drawing than in music. He had taken this view, and from the object he carried me directly to its picture, with the exactness and execution of which I was much delighted. At Affington-house Jones found a letter from his mother, requesting him to come to Chudleigh the next day, to accompany her home on the following one. I again dined with him, and spent the afternoon in delightful conversation, and in examining the books in Mr. Jones's library. When I took leave of him in the evening he warmly pressed my hand, and thanked me for the comfort he had enjoyed for two days. "I feel," said he, "that I now possess the friend I have so often wished for: to-morrow I shall speak of you to my mother and my sister; they know, they participate my sentiments on the subject of friendship, I shall make them happy. My father, too, when he returns, will be delighted with my acquisition: he will use his interest to establish you in the Church, and at the same time to keep you near us. I will, according to your advice, lay open my heart to him: he will now see Sophia's character in a nobler point of view than ever, and will himself become a suitor for me."

The feelings with which I returned to my cottage were similar to those of the evening before, but were confirmed by another day's experience of the genuine magnanimity of my friend. The unaffected manner in which his whole conversation convinced

me that truth and rectitude were the pre-eminent objects of his mind, was an earnest to me, not only of the sincerity of his attachment at the moment of youthful fervour, but of its constancy while I was worthy of it. It was not formed on the basis of fortune or corrupt manners, but the reverse, on that of misfortune, and an unstudied effusion of nature. The pleasure that reigned in my heart sent its spirits to my brain: a degree of refined inebriation took place, and before I fell asleep, I recollected the aërial castle I had formerly built, and upon a better foundation erected another which did not vanish quite so soon: but instead of a parsonage, a garden, and the love of my parishioners, the pleasing illusion presented to my view a stall, and a polished congregation. This flash of secret ambition passed my mind undetected at the time, but I have since endeavoured to trace the origin of it. I could not ascribe it to pride, which my education had weeded from my heart, if ever it was there; I therefore attributed it entirely to the ideas that sprang from my conversation with Jones: with his father's influence with the Bishop, the idea of a stall readily associated, and was naturally followed by that of the society with which he mixed. Be this as it may, the next morning, my thoughts turning on Broke-hall, I reflected on the conduct I was to pursue. It was a damping consideration, and my spirits fell proportionably. If I resolved, on finding myself the friend of Jones, to relinquish the engagement I had made, as degrading, it was incumbent on me to give Lady Broke immediate information of my intention. To relinquish it, however, without consulting the vicar of Holcomb would seem ungrateful, and it would be imprudent, before I had seen Mr. Jones, to throw up the prospects the vicar had perceived through her

Ladyship's fancies. I hesitated till Jones returned with his mother and sister, and then I was too much and too agreeably employed to bestow a thought on Broke-hall.

In the interval I had seen Murphy, to whom I communicated my hopes for him, and he appeared as grateful as if I had actually saved his life. He said he had four or five pounds due to him for teaching, and I promised to find the remainder necessary to make up the twelve guineas required. The joy testified by this young man was a full reward for being the means of it, and it increased the interest I felt for him. I desired him to state his situation to his employers, and to collect what was due to him as soon as possible: nor did I doubt that it would be in my power to establish him in good business at Exeter.

The day on which Jones left Affington, my imagination, among other subjects, dwelled on the scenes that had passed at Ex-Mount, and in the afternoon I walked to the spot to look at it. I had often seen it before as I went by, but I now viewed it with reflections that bestowed an interest which it would never have excited without them. I was proceeding towards Exeter, when Mr. Rundle coming out at the gate, recognized and joined me. I had not met him since I was under his care, though I had frequently thought of him, and more than once resolved to call upon him, from which I had been deterred by the consciousness of my situation. But though I could not force myself upon any man, the sense of inferiority did not embarrass me in company with those who entered freely and on equal terms into conversation with me. I had indeed felt the lecture of my patron of Holcomb, and had been abashed by the pride of the Joneses of Pinhoe: but Rundle's coun-

tenance and manners inspired ease, and the pride of *my* Joneses consisted in being superior to haughtiness.

Rundle accosted me with his natural cheerfulness: "After all, Sir," said he, "our legs are our best horses; if they do not carry us so swiftly, they carry us more safely; and if they do not go so far an end upon a dusty road, they allow us a greater degree of independence. If you are going to Exeter, for example, we may walk through beautiful fields, and shorten the way." Anxious to hear something of the Nevill family, I was happy to accept his invitation. "Though I speak in favour of walking," said he, "I do not forget the fever your legs threw you into; but as a feeling man spares his beast, so a rational man will not let his legs run away with him, and endanger his life. I am glad to see by your looks that you keep within bounds." I thanked him, but at the same time confessed that I still made abundant use of my legs: and mentioning my ramble with Jones, the preceding day, I told him we had made a round of an extent that took in a pretty spot called the Hut, where we stopped.—"Stopped!" said he, rather abruptly, "what, at Mrs. Alton's?" I replied in the affirmative. "Do you know Mrs. Alton?" cried he, before I could explain; which I now did, telling him how much I had been struck with Miss Alton, and inquiring who they were. "Mrs. Alton is an amiable woman," said he, "I knew her before her marriage, nearly twenty years ago, when she went to reside in Hampshire: she has been long a widow, and having, besides the loss of her husband, met with other afflicting circumstances, has become a recluse. On this principle it is, seconded by motives of economy, that she has taken the

"Hut, whither she has retired with her only daughter, with a determination to see no company whatever, at least for the present, and I imagine that she will be very angry with the gardener for having admitted you."—"For this I should be sorry," replied I, "as I am, to think that so beautiful a young woman as Miss Alton should be shut up from society."—"Seclusion," said he, "is as much her taste as that of her mother, of whom she is dotingly fond. I give you this hint, lest in any future ramble, as you do ramble so far, you or your friend Jones should think it necessary to call. I know it would distress them."—"I will make it a point to put him on his guard," replied I. "Do," said he, "and so will I, for I am intimate with him."—"I know you are, Sir," cried I, "as I have heard him speak of your friendship, and when I saw you come out of Mr. Nevill's gate, it brought to my recollection a sad event in which you took so generous a part. May I take the liberty of asking how Mr. Nevill does, and whether your visit to Ex-Mount was professional or not?"—"I am sorry," replied he, "to say it was professional: Mr. Nevill has never recovered the blow you allude to, and I doubt whether he ever will, though upon the whole, I think the chances are now in his favour."—"I understand," said I, "that she was a lovely young woman." My remark, though defective in point of grammatical precision, was perfectly intelligible to Mr. Rundle. "Yes," cried he, "and I can see that you are no stranger to the effect of her loveliness on Jack Jones: but, for his father's sake, I trust he has now completely overcome the passion she inspired. This is not, I think, the first time we have talked on the subject of love; the longer you live, the more will you see of the havoc it makes in the world. I know not

“ which is the more to be pitied, the man whom it
 “ robs of his life, or the woman whom it robs of her
 “ innocence :

“ Ut flos in septis secretus nascitur hortis,
 “ Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber,
 “ Multi illum pueri, multæ optavere puellæ:
 “ Idem quum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,
 “ Nulli illum pueri, nullæ optavere puellæ—

“ These lines of Catullus are not more beautiful than
 “ true : will you have them in English ?

“ As a sweet bud just opening to the eye,
 “ Screen'd by some garden shrub that rises nigh,
 “ By zephyrs fann'd, and rear'd by sun and show'r ;
 “ Each youth, each maid admires the lovely flow'r :

“ Press'd by unhallow'd hands it droops its head,
 “ And falls dishonour'd on its earthy bed :
 “ No longer to delight retains the pow'r ;
 “ No youth, no maid admires the fallen flower.”

Mr. Rundle having alluded to the poor fellow who died at the inn, I told him that I had visited the grave of William, and I asked if he had ever seen or heard of Amy. “ I have thought of her more than once,” said he, “ but she has never yet made her appearance, and from the length of time I do not suppose she ever will now.” We both regretted that William's story could be traced no farther, and I walked on chatting with this agreeable man till we arrived at the suburbs of Exeter, where I took my leave of him, and returned to my cottage, my imagination fully occupied with the late pleasing occurrences of my life.

Jones returned on the day he had mentioned, with his mother and sister, and as soon as he arrived, came over to my cottage, to carry me to Affington-

house, assuring me that it was not only his wish, but his mother's invitation. I yielded to the tide of happiness, and considered it as the interference of Providence. I found Mrs. and Miss Jones greatly prepossessed in my favour, and their sentiments and manners highly congenial with Jones's. Mrs. Jones spoke to me without reserve, nay as if I had been her son, and the sweetness of her countenance won my affection. I have already said that Miss Jones was handsome, but I then spoke of her as having had a transient view of her features. Oh ! how heightened were their beauty by the charm of affability, good sense, and benevolent sentiment ! The attention with which she listened, the deference with which she gave her own opinion, her eagerness to be informed of things worthy of her knowledge, and her readiness to devote her own attainments to the use or pleasure of others, gifted her person with a power of attraction which the mere perfection of form and all the vaunted accomplishments of female education can never bestow. I felt in her company a delight I had never experienced before : it was of a different nature from that which I felt in the friendship of her brother. I did not at first readily account for it. The passion of love I was sure it could not be, for two reasons ; the one was, that I never thought of her as a mistress ; and the other, that I reflected without pain on her being destined to bless some happier man. Perhaps I was a novice, but after deciding that it could not be love, I ascribed it to the general fascination of condescension and affability, combining with female beauty ; which I had learned in theory, but which it had not been my lot to meet with before. However this was, the week that succeeded her return from Chudleigh was to me one of inexpressible happiness. The impression I had had the good fortune to make on her father she repeat-

ed to me in so bewitching a manner, and both she and her mother expressed their participation of his sentiments with such benignity that my heart was completely enraptured. Affection and gratitude on my part, unmixed with awe, and a dignified familiarity on the part of my friends, soon domesticated me at Affington-house. My lute was introduced, and I was not a little proud to display my skill in music, and to exert my voice. Jones, to please me, sent for Murphy, and engaging him to attend his sister for the purpose of accompanying her on the violin, we had several little concerts. In the course of the week I had likewise the pleasure of procuring my musician's discharge: he had collected four guineas, Jones paid him three in advance, and I supplied the other five. I can truly say I felt the most disinterested pleasure in this action, and that I considered it at the time as one approved by the Almighty. As the few scholars, however, whom he taught could not supply him even with a scanty subsistence, I engaged the benevolent inhabitants of Affington-house to patronize him, and Murphy had half a dozen new pupils before he had received his discharge a week.

We were too much engaged at Affington to ramble again so far as the Hut, but I did not fail to report Mr. Rundle's caution to Jones, who readily determined not to break in upon the retirement of the Altons.

Of the lively enjoyment of this memorable period of my life there was but one abatement; Jones, in spite of his hope in his father, in spite of the excellence of his understanding, and of the rectitude of his mind, convinced me that his cheerfulness was entirely the effect of endeavour. At times, though apparently attentive, I found him really absent; and more than once, when he and I were alone,

he abruptly quitted the topic of conversation to express a hope, or ejaculate a fear respecting Sophia, then as suddenly resumed the thread of his discourse. These proofs of the deep root his passion had taken, and the apprehension of the obstacles it would meet in the delicacy of his father's feelings, were ingredients that gave a bitter dash to my cup of pleasure. Still I was happy; because apprehension was mixed with hope. Oh! too happy! for even happiness may be excessive in the present state of nature and the vicissitudes of life: it is excessive when the loss of it may so shake reason as to destroy all the milder foundations of content.

One morning going over to Affington-house, as usual, knowing that I was expected, I was informed by the servant that Jones and his sister had been obliged to go to Ex-Mount in consequence of a message they had received from Mrs. Nevill, but that Mrs. Jones was at home in her dressing-room, and wished to see me. I flew up the steps with a light heart, and with all the familiarity of a son expected by his mother, but was stopped at the head of the stairs, by Mrs. Jones's maid, who told me that her mistress begged I would go into her young master's study, where she would come to me in a few minutes. I obeyed, and entering Jones's room, took up a book that lay on his table; but though my eyes followed the lines of the pages, they conveyed not a single idea to my mind; for instead of reading, I fell into one of my visions of happiness, which I now usually did whenever I was alone. I retraced the commencement of my friendship with Jones, and its happy progress; I pictured Mrs. Jones's return, her goodness to me, Miss Jones's affability, and charming smiles; and from the past I winged my flight into futurity, where the brightest colours met my imagination, and transport-

ed me into the regions of romance. I was wound up by fancy to a kind of delirium, and when Mrs. Jones came in, I danced up to her with an air that bordered upon levity ; so completely was I carried away by the boundless joy of my heart.

“ My good, young friend,” said Mrs. Jones, “ I am sorry to see you in such spirits, as I am under the painful necessity of checking them. Come, sit down, and hear what I have to say with patience and fortitude.” These words, and the gravity of her countenance, though still placid, surprised and alarmed me. “ What can I have done,” cried I, turning pale, “ that deserves your displeasure ? Has my happiness made me forget myself ? Have I encroached on your goodness ? How eagerly will I rectify any error I have committed ! ” — “ I fully believe you,” replied she, “ but I know of none, and am extremely perplexed how to act. Trusting, however, to the good sense you possess, I think it my best way to apply to yourself for assistance in the performance of a task which I assure you will scarcely wring your heart more than it does mine.” — “ Gracious God ! ” exclaimed I, “ what heavy misfortune awaits me ! *Your* heart wrung ! Heaven forbid ! Let mine be tortured, but, oh ! may your’s never know a pang. Tell me, Madam, tell me what it is.” My agitation affected Mrs. Jones, and a tear started to her eye as she bade me be composed ; it dispersed, however, without falling, and she said ; “ I am going to ask you a question which I am sure you will answer with sincerity, whatever be the consequence.” — “ I will, indeed,” cried I, “ speak, my dear Madam, what is it ? ” — “ Have you ever,” said she, “ conversed with my son respecting Sophia Nevill ? ” If I had been suddenly charged with a murder of which I had been guilty, it could not have had a

more powerful effect upon my frame. The blood that had retired to my heart rushed into my face, and dyed it deeper than scarlet. I stood abashed and mute. "I see," said Mrs. Jones, "that you are incapable of uttering a falsehood. If you know her story, which I have now no doubt of, you cannot be surprised that Mr. Jones should be anxious to divert John's thoughts from her, however amiable she may be. He was flattering himself that time and my son's good sense had been propitious to his wishes, when by some means he was informed that you had discovered Miss Nevill's retreat, and was the medium of a correspondence between her and John—" Roused from my trance by this falsehood, I was going to contradict it; but before I had uttered the exclamation it prompted, Mrs. Jones stopped me by saying; "I beg you will be patient and hear me. I pity more than blame you, for I see there is no deceit in your character, and that you esteem it a virtue not to be unworthy the confidence reposed in you. I allow it to be so, and however I may lament it in the present instance, it does not alter my regard for you. Mr. Jones, alarmed at the intelligence he has received, has written me a letter in which—but remember that I am still your friend, and be assured, I will take a proper opportunity of doing you justice—" Mrs. Jones's feelings made her hesitate, and I spared her the pain of pronouncing my sentence, by telling her that I saw I had offended Mr. Jones in presuming to accept the friendship of his son, and that though I could not easily relinquish it, I would do what was in my power, I would withdraw from the enjoyment of his company, and from the too delightful honour that had been bestowed upon me at Affington-house. "Outcast of nature as I am," cried I, "how could

“ I expect to find a place in so delightful a society !
“ Was it for me, unknown, unacknowledged in the
“ world, to mingle with the noblest of its inhabit-
“ ants ! Believe me, Madam,” continued I, burst-
ing into tears, “ that my felicity was accidental, and
“ that in the enjoyment of it I have not had room for
“ one presumptuous or ambitious thought. It is
“ Mr. Jones’s pleasure that I should be dismissed—”
—“ Not *dismissed*,” said she, “ he uses no such
“ word—” —“ He wishes, however,” continued I,
“ that I should be separated from his son—is it not
“ so, my dear Madam ?” She was silent, and her
attention seemed divided between my question, and
the means of softening her reply. “ I understand
“ your silence,” said I, “ but before I obey the
“ mandate, before I quit this blest abode, and resign
“ myself to my fate, let me assure you that I have
“ been misrepresented to Mr. Jones. However
“ happy I have been in his son’s confidence, I feel
“ that I have made no bad use of it ; I never saw
“ Miss Nevill in my life, I never was the means of
“ conveying a letter to or from her, nor do I know
“ where she resides. Adieu ! my dear Madam, ac-
“ cept the best wishes of a heart most grateful for
“ your kindness.” I seized her hand, kissed it, and
would have quitted her, but she held me fast, and
drew me back. “ Do not think,” said she, “ that
“ I can give you up so easily : Mr. Jones will be
“ convinced. In the mean time, keep up your spi-
“ rits, and assist me in complying with his desire. I
“ have a letter in my pocket for my son, which calls
“ him to London immediately, and I am to prevent
“ his seeing you before his departure. I make it a
“ point always to comply, as well as I can, with
“ whatever Mr. Jones wishes : in this instance I
“ must depend upon you ; may I ?” Choked by
tears and an agony of grief, I could make no reply.

“Come, come,” continued she, “this is not manly, recover yourself, and do not forfeit the esteem you have gained, by showing me that you are unequal to the trials Providence thinks proper to put you to.”—“It is no slight trial,” said I, recovering myself a little, “but I *will* remember that I am in the hand of Providence, and submit.” On my saying this, she embraced me affectionately, bade me be of good cheer; and said she would let me know when she could see me again. I then promised her to leave Affington till Jones was gone, and, once more kissing her hand, blessed her, and tore myself away, the most miserable of men.

CHAPTER XIX.

Morland avoids his friend—A doubt of Providence—The doubt dispelled—Enmity of man to man—Mr. Whitaker's good news—How received by Morland, who removes from Affington to Broke-hall.

How wonderfully are we made ! how mysterious is the connexion between the body and the soul ! That my feet conveyed me to my chamber is certain, but it is as certain that I was sitting there some time before my senses perceived it. My mind and person were as much separated in their respective operations, performed at the same juncture, as if they had never belonged to each other. When I was brought to myself by a fresh shower of tears, I had no recollection of the objects I must have passed, or of the manner in which I had been transported from Jones's study to the chair on which I sat. I had been hurled from the pinnacle of happiness, and stunned by the fall. I remained a considerable while absorbed in my misery before I could even make an effort to

recover myself. At length I was roused by recollecting my promise to Mrs. Jones, and her reliance on me, and I resolved to do every thing in my power to justify the good opinion entertained of me by that amiable woman. Putting a change of linen and my Seneca into my pocket, and telling Bridget that particular circumstances obliged me to go from home for a day or two, I left the cottage, and struck across the country to avoid the possibility of meeting Jones returning to Affington-house.

I put up at a small public-house on the Chudleigh road, where I staid all night. My endeavours to compose my mind were long unsuccessful. I was not conscious of having forfeited by misconduct the happiness I had lost; but however this may appear to some a ground of consolation, I felt it no allay to my misfortune; on the contrary I at first thought it doubly hard upon me, reflecting that had I deserved it my conscience would have justified the punishment, and that remorse would have been added to sorrow. I read Seneca, but he made little impression on me, for my mind wandered elsewhere. I endeavoured to fix it on Providence, as I had been accustomed to do in former paroxysms of wretchedness, but for the first time in my life it rejected the consolation: if I did not murmur, I at least gave up the idea of my meeting with Jones being the result of his will; I perceived it to be an accident easily and suddenly defeated, and my soul, incapable of comfort, resorted to objects that increased its misery. Foolish, foolish fellow that I was!

I passed a sleepless night, till the house was stirring in the morning, when I fell into a doze which lasted about two hours. During this slumber I dreamt that I was sailing rapidly with the tide down the river Ex, till approaching the bank formed by

the garden of the Hut, the breeze slackened, and I saw the lovely Louisa Jones sitting with another lady on the bench under the willow. I ordered the boatman to steer for the bank, on perceiving which the lady that was with Miss Jones made a hasty retreat into the house. I nevertheless landed, and was received with an enchanting smile; but instead of the bench under the willow at the Hut, I was sitting in the rustic alcove at Affington with Miss Jones, holding her hand, and occasionally pressing it to my lips. After some time we were no longer in the alcove, but at the altar of a cathedral where the bishop was reading the marriage service, and I was placing the wedding ring on her finger, when the vision vanished. On waking, the dream was very strong in my recollection, and having little excitement to rise, I continued in bed combining the pictures of memory and imagination. After lying some time in this state, I looked back through the four-and-twenty hours that had elapsed since I left Affington, and I found that my thoughts had been much less frequently turned upon Jones, than upon his sister. Combining this observation with my dream, I suddenly detected the passion that was stealing into my heart, and in seeing my danger, I became sensible of my ingratitude to that Providence which was rescuing me from it. Fortunate for me was it that my passions were less ardent than those of my friend, for, as it was, I experienced no little difficulty in restraining my imagination to a moderate contemplation of charms that had so imperceptibly captivated me. Another such week passed at Affington I must either have aspired to the hand of Louisa Jones, or sunk into irretrievable despair: but awakened to a sense of my situation, I was enabled by a seasonable struggle to give her that place in my esteem which she deserved, and to think of her not so often as of

her brother. However, though I consoled myself in some degree by considering my misfortune in this point of view, it is not to be understood that I felt less anguish at being separated from Jones, but that I learned to bear it better.

One thing that gave me great pain, when I had leisure to think of it, was, that I had unwittingly made an enemy; a secret and ungenerous one, who to injure me scrupled not to employ falsehood; an enemy I endeavoured in vain to trace, for I had injured no one, I had offended no one; nor could I account for the discovery of the part that was true in the intelligence conveyed to Mr. Jones, for the whole subject of his son's confidence had been imparted to me with the utmost privacy. Man lives amidst enemies of his own species, all other creatures of the same nature spare one another, even devils are said to agree among themselves;

O shame to men! devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds—

but man delights in injuring man, in calumny and in blood. Some of the sentiments of the curate of Reading occurred to my mind, and I began to think less favourably of mankind than formerly; but far from adopting the saying of one of the Grecian sages, *the majority is bad*, I advanced no nearer to misanthropy than to allow that there are bad as well as good: in my experience the latter still preponderated, in spite of Pinhoe Jones, the unfeeling landlady, the villain Montague, and my unknown enemy. I once more fervently recommended myself to Providence, and resolving to attend to every thing that depended upon my own conduct, I set out to pay my respects to the vicar of Holcomb, still keeping Oxford in view.

I fortunately found Mr. Whitaker at home and alone. Having sent in my name, he desired his boy to tell me to come in. I found him reading a new magazine. Without taking his eyes off the page, he called me by my name, asked me how I did, and desired me to sit down. I remembered his lecture on ease, and continued standing. He went on reading, pronouncing detached sentences in a kind of loud whisper, and taking no notice whatever of me. I remained near ten minutes in this awkward and mortifying predicament. He at last put the magazine down, and, turning from his table towards me, cast one knee over the other, sitting on the outer edge of his nether thigh, so as to expose full to my view the part behind tightly compressed within its raiment; at the same time one arm carelessly thrown on the back of his chair supported his head, while the other found its contrasted curve a-kimbo on his projected hip. I should not do justice to my patron if I did not add, that the fall of the magazine from his hands, the assumption of the patronal posture, and a repetition of, "Morland, how do you do?" were simultaneous. After I had thanked him, and made my enquiry in turn: "Where have you been all this time?" said he; "I have very pleasant intelligence for you—Come, take a chair, take a chair." I hesitated—"Psha! man," cried he, "do as I bid you." On this I sat down. "I have not seen you," continued the vicar, "since you were at Broke-hall. The very next day I had a visit from Lady Broke and her daughter; her Ladyship not being able to postpone thanking me for recommending you to her. You completely fascinated her with the Ode on the Passions. I did not let her cool, my boy; I repeated all I knew of your history, ventured to hint a belief that you were well descended, as I found it not disagreeable to

“ her pride, and endeavoured to influence all her
“ feelings in your favour. It had its effect : she
“ determined to amend your fate, and said she
“ believed she should principally employ you as
“ her secretary. She told me too that if you chose
“ it you might go to Broke-hall before the time ap-
“ pointed, and the sooner the better. I give you
“ joy, Morland : I am highly pleased that I have put
“ you in so fair a train. As I advised you before,
“ mind your *p*’s and *q*’s, and you may be appointed
“ to charm her Ladyship from the pulpit.”

I felt my obligation to Mr. Whitaker, and I thanked him sincerely ; but at the same time I could not avoid a secret reflection on that careless disposition by which the very best intentions of benevolent characters are liable to be frustrated, and I foresaw a disappointment at Broke-hall, if not similar in its nature to that at Affington, arising from a similar cause. It was full three weeks since Lady Broke had intimated her desire that I should shelter myself immediately under her roof, and to suffer nearly the month she at first appointed to elapse, without even noticing the favour she conferred in the alteration, might be deemed unpardonable. I had told Mr. Whitaker, as well as Flora, where I lodged, and from the latter’s not sending to me, it was clear that her lady left the information to the former, and would probably impute my neglect of her offer to choice. This, two days sooner, would have given me no uneasiness, but in the turn Mr. Jones’s mind had taken it created some alarm, and I expressed a wish that I had known Lady Broke’s permission sooner. “ Why, indeed,” said the vicar, “ it
“ would have been better ; and what in the name of
“ wonder have you been about that I never saw
“ you ?” I said that having informed him where I staid, and also given my direction to her Ladyship’s

servant, I was unwilling to appear troublesome. "Nonsense!" cried he, "you ought to have come to the vicarage. However, I do not think there's any harm done; you must go over to the hall immediately, and make a handsome excuse—you may throw all the blame upon me, and I will justify you."

This new mark of Mr. Whitaker's benevolence excited so lively a gratitude that I lost sight of his imperfections, and it was not till I had left him and was meditating on his character in my way to Broke-hall, that I again lamented that it should be so heterogeneous; that goodness of heart should be counteracted by thoughtlessness, readiness to oblige by consequential manners, and consciousness of propriety by pride and excessive irritability. I was by no means so much hurt with him on this occasion as I had been on the former one, for I reflected that had it been my lot to have been domesticated so early at Broke-hall, I should probably never have formed a friendship with Jones, and should certainly have had no intimacy with him at that time. However painfully torn from him, I still felt his attachment the greatest blessing of my life, still fondly cherished a hope that time and events, under the guidance of Providence, would restore us to each other. His communications, indeed, had opened a source of mortification, to which it was now necessary I should reconcile myself; they had disgusted me with the person by whom my present wants were to be supplied, and my hopes for the future sustained. The whims of Lady Broke were amiable traits, were absolute virtues, compared with her conduct towards the Nevills, in which she was presented to my view as the malignant enjoyer of the misfortune of a charming family, and as the detestable slanderer of a lovely creature, who deserved more pity than con-

demnation. It was not without a wound to my feelings that I determined to yield to necessity, and become the dependant of a being whom I could neither respect nor regard: a determination which I have never reconciled to my mind, and which, while I live, though it has been expiated, I shall consider as a want of virtue. As I walked from Holcomb to Broke-hall I endeavoured to banish from my mind the part of her character that created abhorrence, and to dwell on those that excited ridicule and contempt; on her vanity, and pretension to taste and literature. Even in this point of view, in spite of the vicar's lesson, I felt averse to the part I was about to play. It was the part of a hypocrite, and its being my interest, far from extenuating was an aggravation of the vice. To turn the follies of others to our own advantage in private life, was a maxim against which my feelings and my principles revolted. I was more than once upon the point of turning my back on Broke-hall, but self prevailed, and in the dread of losing every resource, I suffered my reason to be led by the common arguments of the needy, that it was necessary to find a livelihood, and as choice was rarely to be had, that which offered was not to be rejected; that the dependant was not answerable for the conduct of those by whom they were supported; that if the poor resolved to be connected with those only who were virtuous, how many wretched beings would starve! To this reasoning of poverty my acquaintance with history enabled me to add the examples of wise, learned, and virtuous slaves, who served villains and monsters, and I arrived at the porter's lodge in some degree reconciled to my fate.

At the house door I asked for Flora, who, informed of my being in the hall, did not suffer me

to kick my heels there so long as I had done before. I soon heard her light feet patting quickly through the passage, and I went forward to meet her. "Oh! you are come at last!" said she; "but I can assure you my Lady is not very well pleased at your neglect of the permission she gave you, to come home immediately: here, has she been expecting you these three weeks past; and not a word from you why or wherefore you did not come. La! after seeing us that day, I should have thought my Lady's message would have set all your emotions in a flutter; and that you would have flown to us the moment you heard it. Here did my Lady order a nice room in the castle to be got up for you, nay, and saw to it herself, and made arrangements for your being treated like a misfortunate gentleman. Oh fie! Mr. Edward! who would have expected such a want of emotion from such a genteel exterior? I should as soon—" How long Flora would have harangued, I cannot pretend to say; but, restraining the air in her lungs, beyond an appropriate quantity of words, she was obliged to stop in the beginning of a new sentence, to draw her breath, and I hastily seized the opportunity to speak in my turn. "Gently, gently, my pretty Flora," said I, "listen to me a moment, and you'll not find me so devoid of feeling as you imagine. I never heard a word of your Lady's goodness towards me, till this very morning; nay, I have not sat down since it was communicated to me, but came on directly, to receive her Ladyship's commands."—"What nice words you do use!" exclaimed Flora; "it is a clear presumptuous proof, that you are a misfortunate gentleman under a cloud. Well! I am so glad! but

“how came you not to hear it before? My Lady told me she sent you word you might come when you liked.” I explained the vicar’s negligence; but, at the same time, divided the blame between him and Flora, whose emotions I arraigned in turn, for not making use of the knowledge she had of my direction. “Why, indeed,” said she, “my Lady took it for granted that Mr. Whitaker would let you know immediately, and so supposing you did know she thinks you very careless; but now, I wish with all my heart I had wrote to you of my own head. I tell you what,” continued she, laying her forefinger gently on my shoulder, “I’ll go and explain matters to her Ladyship before you see her, that she may receive you as you deserve.” I told her it was exactly what I was going to propose, and Flora, after some friendly speeches, left me among the satinwood bookcases, exotic plants, birds, and fishes.

I have little to say of this second interview with Lady Broke; I saw her but for a few minutes, as she was called away from me to company; her anger was appeased, and I engaged to return with my things to Broke-hall the next day, or at farthest the day after. I gave myself this latitude that I might be sure Jones was gone from Affington, before I ventured to go to my cottage; for I was determined, whatever I suffered, to deserve the confidence and esteem of his mother by a strict observance of my promise.

At Exeter, I called on Mr. Rundle, from whom I learned, that Jones had loitered some hours in the town that very morning; that he had been enquiring for me, and, that he had at last, with the greatest reluctance, set off upon his journey. This intelligence gave a severe pang to my heart; and in be-

ing true to my promise I charged myself with being untrue to friendship. How was this remorse increased, when at Affington, I found that Jones had been again and again at my cottage, both on the evening before, and on the morning I was at Holcomb and Broke-hall, and that he had left two letters for me ! In the first, still hoping to see me, he briefly mentioned, that Mr. Jones had sent for him immediately to London ; pressing me to come to Affington-house. In the second, he expressed surprise at my absence, and great uneasiness lest he should be obliged to go off without seeing me. He said, that he had written me a letter chiefly respecting Miss Nevill, which he had sent by Hewson, who not finding me at the cottage had brought it back, but that he would still send it, if he did not see me : he wished me to go to London with him, and conjured me to give up the scheme of dependence on the Brokes. He concluded with a warm effusion of friendship, entreating me, if I returned in time, to go over to the hotel in Exeter, where he should remain till the last moment in the hope of seeing me. On reading this letter I repented the promise I had given to Mrs. Jones, and reproached myself with refining away the claims of friendship in favour of an imaginary virtue, exerted for the gratification of prejudice. I felt a momentary desire to assert, in defiance of every opposition, the rights of an attachment founded on the purest principles ; but, when I reflected on the union of the Joneses, I would much rather have died, or lingered out life in sorrow, than have been the instrument of their dissension. I again resigned myself to Providence, confident that if I acted my part, his dispensations, however severe or unaccountable, would prove real blessings.

Having composed my mind as well as I could, I prepared for my departure from Ben's cottage. It did not require much time; for I had only to put my books and music into my trunk, and return the lute to its owner. Ben and Bridget were grieved to hear they were to lose me, and little Nancy had a hearty cry. I assured them I would never forget them, and that I would come and see them as often as I could. I paid for my lodging and board a month, though I had been with the good people little more than three weeks: this Bridget at first opposed, but I prevailed upon her to take the two guineas, and I gave Nancy a crown to buy her a new pair of shoes. Before I went to bed I took a review of my finances, and found in my purse, a sum which with the money deposited for the lute, made twenty-seven pounds and a few shillings; nine pounds less than it contained when I came to the cottage; but, as five guineas of the reduction were a loan to Murphy, I was very well pleased with my economy, notwithstanding the little extravagance I had run into in the hire of a lute, which, with six lessons from Murphy, that I paid when I left off learning, amounted exactly to a guinea. And here let me observe how little happiness and extravagance are connected: except the bitter separation which terminated my abode at the cottage, I consider the days I spent under Ben Collins's roof among the happiest of my life. I had no desire for sumptuous fare, my natural wants were supplied, I enjoyed my liberty, my presence was a pleasure to the worthy people with whom I lived, I indulged my propensity for music, I was of service to an unfortunate being of my own species, and my mind, elated with the friendship I had formed with Jones, stood at a degree of felicity not often attained in the bosom

of fortune; yet my whole expenditure for the month, and I included my bill at the inn on the Chudleigh road, did not amount to four pounds:

“Man wants but little here below,
“Nor wants that little long.”

Lest, however, these Memoirs should get into the hands of some penurious being, who might be inclined to turn this observation to the support of sordid parsimony, I must say, that the happiness of a man cannot but be augmented in proportion as he possesses the power of communicating it to others; that he who shuts up his means, cuts off his own source; and that avarice is one of the most detestable vices of the soul.

I slept little during my last night at the cottage: so near to Affington-house, I could not but reflect on the occurrences of the last week, and on the vicissitudes of life; on all that had been propitious to hope, and on the dreadful sentence that had repressed it. I rose notwithstanding at my usual hour, in order to be ready to put my trunk into any cart going to Exeter. This being secured, I eat my breakfast, chatting with Ben and Bridget as gaily as I could with a heavy heart, and soon after, taking my lute in my hand, I bade them farewell: the affectionate cottagers blessed me again and again, and stood at their door as long as their eyes could follow me. Passing Ex-Mount I stopped to look once more at the house, and to heave a sigh to the Nevills. There, thought I, there was a fall of happiness, compared to which, mine was but the bursting of a brilliant bubble.

Musing on the obscurity in the dispensations of Providence, some of which appeared totally abandoned to the influence of fortuitous causes, while

others seemed selected for his immediate guidance, I proceeded slowly to Exeter, where I returned the lute to its owner, and received the money I had deposited. I then called on Murphy, meaning to admit him to a certain degree of my confidence ; but he was not in the way, and I left a message informing him that I was removed, but would see him soon. At a loss how to forward my luggage from Exeter, I luckily met my little arch friend of Holcomb, the vicar's boy, who undertook to convey my trunk to the vicarage, whence it might be carried on in the afternoon, by means of some of the Baronet's wains. I thanked the youth, and, trusting all my little property to him, set out on foot for Broke-hall, where I arrived at an early hour, and was welcomed by my friend Flora, who undertook to be mistress of the ceremonies, and ushering me into a room contiguous to her Lady's apartments, introduced me to her companions, Iris and Urania, otherwise Miss Jeney M'Carthy, and Miss Nanny Anderson. Iris was dressed in an airy garb, of all the colours of the rainbow ; and Urania in a sky blue gown, sprinkled with stars. Iris, as I afterwards learned, had charge of her Lady's millinery, and Urania of her wardrobe ; Flora, whose real name was Sukey Fudge, and who seemed to take the lead of the two other damsels, was more immediately the personal attendant of Lady Broke. They were all three deeply versed in taste and emotion, which they had acquired at the fountain head, their Lady being considered by them and herself, as the standard of elegance and sensibility. Whenever they spoké, it was with a heaving of the bosom, and a twist of the neck ; and, in expressing the most trifling opinion, it seemed the constant duty of their eyes to give it force. It was no doubt owing to the vulgarity of the sounds of Jeney, Nanny, and Sukey, that they were discarded for the

softer, classical ones of Flora, Iris, and Urania. The two nymphs received me with due elegance and emotion, and I learned that I was to have the honour of being ranked with them, that is to say, I was to share their breakfast, and form a second table at dinner with them and the butler. I was wise enough not to betray any disrelish for this association; and though my heart was extremely heavy, I endeavoured to return their civilities with cheerfulness, that they might not think me proud.

My trunk was brought in while I was with Mr. Dalby's graces; for the vicar's boy had overtaken me in his cart, and had, soon after I passed Holcomb, met with an opportunity of sending it on. Flora desired Thomas, the servant that brought it in, to carry it to the room allotted for me, which she said she would go and show me at the same time. She conducted me by a narrow staircase to an apartment situated in the castle adjoining the new building, where, telling me, she hoped I should find every thing convenient, and that she would let me know when her Lady wanted me, she left me to settle myself in my new chamber. The man who brought up my trunk loitered in the room till she was gone, then came up to me, and asked if he could be of any use to me. I thanked him and said, that I was accustomed to wait upon myself, and would not trouble him. "I should think it no trouble," "Sir," said Thomas, "even though I had not heard you was a gentleman; pray let me uncord your box." I was a little surprised at this attention, and told him he might help me, as he was so obliging. "I hope, Sir," said he, as he proceeded in the little service he had offered, "that you will be comfortable in your situation with my Lady, though your coming is the occasion of my going." I was considerably affected by this intelligence,

given in such a manner, and at such a moment. "My good fellow," cried I, "I am truly sorry that you should lose your place, because I know from Lady Broke's own mouth, that you have done nothing to deserve it."—"It is not for what I have done," replied Thomas, "but for what I can't do. My Lady means to get up a comical kind of an entertainment called a mask, and she put me to get by heart, and make one of the servants' characters; but I could not manage to remember the words one after another as they come, though I could tell the signification of every sentence: and to be sure she has a right to please her fancies; yet, Mr. Morland, I can't but think it a little hard that, after doing for years the duty for which I was hired, I should be turned away because I am not handy enough to be a stage-player."—"I think so too," said I, "and if I had any power you should certainly keep your place, even though I gave up the situation her Ladyship has thought proper to provide for me: but my staying or going, I fear, will make no difference as to you."—"Perhaps," answered he, "when you come to talk to my Lady, you may put her off the mind of parting with me." Having promised to do my best for him, I entered into some talk with him respecting the family, and I found his attachment was more to the substantial advantages he enjoyed in eating and drinking, in clothes and good wages, than to the persons from whom they were derived. He said, however, that it was not for him to judge of his employers; they were to look to themselves, he had only to do his business and be satisfied. I asked him how he came to be so well acquainted with my name, and what concerned me. "Oh Lord, Sir," said he, "such is the itch of talking, that what is known to one, soon flies through the family. All that Mr.

“ Whitaker said of you to my Lady she told to Flora, with her intentions respecting you ; Flora told it to Iris and Urania, they talked of it at dinner before the butler and the servant that waited on them, and it was then carried to the kitchen. Every thing is known to every body, though to be sure some things are only talked of in whispers, and by two’s at a time, for they are secrets ; such as my Lady’s ways, Mr. Broke’s goings on, and Miss Broke’s frolics ; but, as I said before, it is no business of mine, they have money enough, and may do as they please.” Saying this, he offered to take my clothes and shoes to brush, to which I now readily consented, for they wanted it much. When he was gone, I had leisure to examine my room, which, though antique, was not unpleasant. It was furnished with chairs, tables, and a couple of large looking glasses. My bed was a very neat one, and placed in the farther angle of the chamber to increase the space before it. I could have been satisfied ; but, alas ! as I sat in a chair to rest, I again felt myself alone. Jones was torn from me, perhaps for ever ; and could any one at Broke-hall supply his place ?

CHAPTER XX.

Morland’s second reception at Broke-hall—Preparations for celebrating Miss Broke’s birth-day—The secrets of a mask betrayed—The part appointed for Morland—Lady Broke’s mythology—The butler—A second table—An unexpected meeting.

IN the course of an hour I received a summons to attend Lady Broke, who honoured me with a gracious reception in consequence of Flora’s report ; but

neither her smiles nor favourable sentiments could obliterate the impression her conduct had made on my mind, and she appeared hideous in my eyes: nor did this natural disgust wear off sufficiently to leave me unconstrained, till her conversation, questions, and directions, fixed my attention on her character and pursuits. She was in the china-room. After expressing her satisfaction with me, and her dissatisfaction with Mr. Whitaker, she desired me to take the chair that was on the opposite side of the table at which she was sitting. Greatly surprised at her condescension, I conceived that she had forgotten herself; I therefore bowed and continued standing, which she observed and said; "I see, Mr. Morland, that you do not belie the observation of that great genius—a—I forget his name, who said, that modesty is ever the attendant of merit. I have had a great deal of conversation with Mr. Whitaker about you, and I was pleased to find that I had not been mistaken in my ideas of you the first time I saw you, for you must know that I have a great deal of discernment, and I saw, by the first glance, that you were any thing but a footman; in short, I saw that you were a gentleman in disguise, and I went the very next day to Holcomb to convince the vicar that it was exactly as I thought. At first, supposing it would be adverse to your interest, he attempted to suppress the fact, but his art was nothing to my discernment; and when I assured him that my feelings were interested about you, for you must know I have a great deal of feeling, he out with the truth. Now pray then sit down, and let me talk to you." I bowed, and, considering this as the first step to the pulpit, obeyed.

"You must know," proceeded her Ladyship, "that I have long wished for a person to keep copies of my letters; and transcribe things for me;

“ for though my nymphs are clever girls, they none
“ of them write a good hand. The post will exactly
“ suit you, and as you read and recite so well, you
“ will exactly suit me. I will make your situation
“ comfortable, and I don’t doubt you will return my
“ goodness to my satisfaction. I have already given
“ orders that you should be used with all the deli-
“ cacy due to an unfortunate gentleman, and Flora,
“ whom you know, will take care that you meet with
“ nothing to hurt your feelings. Speak to her free-
“ ly for whatever you may want. I am only sorry
“ for one thing, which is, that I cannot offer you a
“ cover at Sir Nicholas’s table. Sir Nicholas is a
“ singular character, as you will see when you have
“ been a little longer in the family. By and by,
“ however, even that may be done, and in the mean
“ time, I think you will find yourself tolerably situat-
“ ed at the second table; where you will sit down only
“ with my young women and Sir Nicholas’s butler,
“ Mr. Radley, a very decent, unassuming, honest
“ man.” I replied that I could not but be satisfied
with an arrangement so much beyond my expectation,
when the sudden change of my prospects in life in-
duced the only person in the world who manifested
the slightest concern for me to propose service as the
sole alternative remaining for my support. This ex-
cited Lady Broke’s curiosity to hear from myself the
account of my views, and of my disappointment; and
as the vicar’s caution against liberal pretensions ap-
peared no longer necessary, I scrupled not to make the
most of my hopes while Mrs. Waller was alive. I gave
her Ladyship an account of my education, and I par-
ticularly dwelt on that part of it in which I was pre-
paring myself for orders. I spoke of Oxford, and of
the eagerness with which I was pursuing my studies
when the curate of Reading came to announce my fall.
If it was a meanness, I own I had in my mind the

vicar's *p* and *q* counsel, and was willing to improve the interest I had gained with Lady Broke. In doing this, I studiously avoided all mention of the Joneses, and indeed of all the events that had occurred since my arrival in Devonshire.

While I spoke, she occasionally ejaculated an expression of pity, and when I concluded, she said nobody distinguished merit sooner than she did, and that I might perhaps have to congratulate myself on her penetration. At present, however, her mind, she said, was engaged on preparations for an elegant festival in honour of Miss Broke's birth-day, for which a great number of invitations had been issued and accepted. Every person of note in the county, and many of distinguished rank from distant parts of the kingdom had promised their company. It was, in short, to be a *fête* which was to exceed in magnificence all that had ever been known of the kind before. Her Ladyship regretted that I had not come sooner, as my being present would have forwarded the preparations: "but," continued she, "I know your talents, and what depends upon you will not require much time to be perfected." To this compliment I made my bow, and said I should be happy to receive her commands. She then told me that it was her intention to complete the entertainment by an allegorical mask which she had written herself, and which had been highly applauded by Mr. Dalby, a friend of her's, of great taste and judgment. "You are to take a chief part in it," said she, ringing the bell, the pull of which hung at her hand, "and that you may fully enter into the spirit of it, I intend to read the whole to you." I asked if she would permit me to read it. "Oh! no?" replied she, "I like to read, myself; for you must know I am an excellent reader: I suppose not one in a thousand reads like me. Mr. Dalby

“thinks Flora a good reader, and so indeed she is, but I like my own reading so much better than any body’s I ever heard, that to tell you the truth, I can’t attend to any body else.”—“No doubt, your Ladyship,” said I, straining to give utterance to a compliment which I should have murdered, and with it, perhaps, my new hopes, had not Flora’s entrance fortunately drawn her attention, and caused her to interrupt me herself by desiring the nymph to come and take the key of her *secretaire* and bring the mask.

While Flora was gone, “let me see,” cried she, “shall I read the mask first? or shall I go with you, and look at the disposition of the temporary theatre erecting for the performance of it? I think I’ll take you to look at that first, for then, you know, you will have the effect in your head as I read—yes, that shall be it; things to have their effect should be done in order, nobody has such an idea of order as I have.” Flora, who had been no farther than through the aviary to the complicated boudoir, now returned with the mask, which she gave to her Lady. “I am going,” continued her Ladyship, speaking to Flora, “to the stage; get your parasol, and come with me, and bring Iris and Urania.”—“Yes, my Lady;” said the nymph with a smile, and disappeared. As she went, Lady Broke opened the manuscript, and having run over a page, exclaimed; “No, I’m wrong; I ought to read the piece first, and then you know you will have it all in your mind, and be able to suppose the different situations as you look at the stage; yes, I’ll read it first.” She had not got through the *Dramatis Personæ*, and such explanations as she thought necessary to give me for the better understanding of the piece, when the three damsels came in. “I have changed my mind, girls,” said her Ladyship, “I

“ am going to read the mask first : you may stay if
“ you like to hear it again. Should you like to hear
“ me read it once more ?” Urania said it was
impossible to hear it too often: *impossible* was echoed
by Flora, and re-echoed by Iris, though they declared
that they had every word of it by heart. Lady Broke
smiled, and bade them sit down. She then read: “ The
Birth-day—a Mask. The curtain
“ draws up, and discovers Arcadian shepherds and
“ shepherdesses dancing on mount Ida to celebrate
“ the birth-day of Daphne. Aurora passes along
“ the summit of the mountain, and as she disappears,
“ the chariot of the sun rises gradually, till at length
“ Apollo is seen in full glory.”—“ There’s a scene
“ for you,” cried her Ladyship, “ what do you think
“ of that scene ?”—“ Admirable !” was my reply.
Let those who, through a just abhorrence of flattery,
would in my position have told the Lady that a group
of Arcadians were not likely to be collected on the
mountain she had chosen for them, condemn my
want of virtue, as I now do, and the whole part I
assumed in order to ingratiate myself with Lady Broke;
for I own I suddenly became wicked enough to see
the spires of Oxford peeping over Ida; and could I
object to a lady’s transporting a few animated beings
so little a way as from the Peloponnesus across the
Ægean sea in a mythological vessel, when I had dis-
lodged churches and colleges from their foundations
in England, and rebuilt them in the air over a heathen
mount at about ten times the distance ?—“ Admira-
“ ble !” said I. “ I was certain you would think
“ so :” cried her Ladyship, her eyes sparkling with
delight. She then cast a look over the page, and
suddenly exclaimed—“ I knew I was right before—
“ you ought to see the stage first—there is a
“ direction comes in soon, which you will not be able
“ to understand—we will go first, and read after-

“wards: what do you say, Flora?”—“Oh! I think so, my Lady;” replied Flora, “for then Mr. Edward will understand.”—“But then,” said her Ladyship, “it is as yet in the rough; I had better endeavour to explain as I read; what do you think, Urania?”—“Certainly, my Lady,” replied Urania, “and besides there’s nobody there just now to move the machinery.”—“But that’s nothing,” said her Ladyship, “we can have plenty of people in a minute: what think you, Iris?”—“Dear me, my Lady, plenty;” replied Iris: “shall I go for Thomas, and desire Mr. Radley to send the carpenters from their dinners?”—“I know what I’ll do,” said her Ladyship, who had not paid the slightest attention to Iris’s answer—“I have it—I’ll take the mask with me, and read it there; for, being on the spot, every thing will of course be clear.” Saying which, she put the manuscript into my hand, and led the way.

As she walked, she continued talking to me; at times directing my attention by her hand to the beauties her tongue was too much engaged to mention. “That aqueduct,” said she, “is all my own taste; for you must know I have a great deal of taste. Nobody but me would ever have thought of conveying the water over that rock. I should not have enjoyed the beautiful cascade that falls at my door, if I had not taste. I think an arcade is the most elegant object in nature: how do you like those arches? Flora told me you were delighted with the dairy; but we are not going there, we turn to the left. *There*,” continued she, pointing, as we turned, to a mock steeple, at the end of a walk, so little removed as to defy illusion; “*there*, nobody can deny me taste; that was entirely my doing.” It was fortunate for me that Lady Broke took my admiration for granted, and conceived her

questions answered without my opening my lips. She went on from object to object, absorbed in her own talk, and occasionally assuring me of her taste. Her nymphs walked near, attending to her, and displaying their graces and emotions.

We now approached the *al fresco* theatre. It was a stage under a large awning, extended on lofty wooden pillars. In front were seats and music-desks for musicians, sunk sufficiently not to interrupt the view of the spectators, who were to be disposed of at a little distance from the curtain, on rising benches in the open air, or standing, for such as chose it, on the turf, before the building. I found the preparations much farther advanced than I expected from what I had heard. The erection of the theatre having been left to the direction of the property-man of the Exeter company of comedians, exhibited some elegance, and advantage had been taken of the garden scenery, by opening the back of the stage, where Diana was to be seen passing on horseback with her hounds. Lady Broke, in pointing this out, and describing the nature of the scenes that were to be brought from Exeter in the course of the week, completely unfolded the beginning, middle, and end of her mask; and a motley combination it was, of the most common-place mythological images. As the sun rises, Daphne, with her parents and friends, joins the Arcadian personages on Ida, who leave off their dancing, and hail her with a chorus. Apollo, dazzled with her beauty, stops his chariot, admires, and is enamoured. The God of day then hastens to finish his journey, and finding the other superior gods and goddesses assembled on Olympus, makes a rapturous report of Daphne's beauty. He excites a desire in Juno, Minerva, Venus, and Diana to see her, and Jupiter swears he will be of the party. Iris is dispatched to apprise the young Lady of this intended

visit from the celestials, and finds her, at the close of the day, still on Ida among the Arcadians, who on being informed of this honour, sing another chorus on the occasion, to conclude the act. The second act ushers in the night with the moon, as the first had done the day with the sun. The Arcadians are again assembled forming a retinue for Daphne, who makes some reflections on the beauty of the moon, when Mercury enters to announce Jupiter, Apollo, and the goddesses. They are all astonished, and celestial compliments pass in abundance, mixed with a little envy. The goddesses then give her advice in character, in consequence of which, some altercation takes place among them, and they retire less pleased than they entered. Jupiter is forced away by Juno, but Apollo lingers behind, determining to seize and carry off Daphne to mount Olympus. This Diana perceives, and resolves to prevent. Apollo, however, being left alone with Daphne, sings her a love song, and then retires to watch his opportunity. Diana returns, and tells the nymph of her danger, advising her to steal off immediately, and go home. The heroine obeys, and the Arcadians, rambling to the other side of the mountain, the coast is left clear for a change of the scene: the mountain is removed, and the vista completely opened to the trees and shrubs at the back of the theatre, where the real moon, being at its full, shines brilliantly on the surrounding objects. Diana on horseback, with her dogs, is discovered at the end among the shrubs, anxious to counteract Apollo. In front of the stage, Daphne is seen alone hastening home with timid steps. Soon after she disappears, Apollo enters in pursuit of her, and crosses the stage. Diana dismounts and comes up to the front. At the end Daphne is seen flying from Apollo; she makes a turn, by which he loses sight of her, and she has

time to come up to Diana, whose aid she implores, and is hid by her among some laurels, just as Apollo appears again in sight. The enamoured god advances at full speed, and being assured by the goddess that the object of his pursuit is changed into a laurel, droops his head, and breaks off a branch of the tree, with which he retires. By this time Daphne's parents and the Arcadians are come in search of her. She is called from the laurels by her celestial protectress, and restored to her anxious friends, who finish the piece with a joyous chorus.

In gradually betraying the secrets of her drama, Lady Broke entered into prolix explications, demanded praise by the questions she put to me, though she seldom waited for a reply, and was redundant to a ridiculous excess in assuring me that she possessed taste. Having walked over the theatre, and made all her observations, she again changed her mind as to the place of reading, which was at last determined should be the china-room, for there the mask would not be interrupted, as it was liable to be at the theatre, whither the workmen would soon be repairing from their dinner, and every part of it would now be perfectly understood.

The piece being read, and the nymphs withdrawn, her Ladyship informed me that it was differently cast to what was at first intended: that Miss Broke was to have personated Daphne, but that proving too giddy (being only sixteen last year) to retain her part, which she no sooner learned than she forgot, Urania was to undertake it. The part of Apollo was first meant for her brother Mr. Broke, but Nick's retentive powers were still inferior to his sister's, besides he had a trick of laughing where he should not. It then fell to Mr. Dalby, but he too begged to decline it, after the part had been in his hands a fortnight, as Miss Broke was not to be the Daphne.

“ Now,” added her Ladyship, “ it comes to you, “ and I am glad of it, for though I think Mr. Dalby “ a pretty poet, I am as well pleased that my Apollo “ should be in your hands. All the other characters “ have been disposed of for some time. Iris is to “ be Iris, and Flora in trowsers, with—what do you “ call them?—wings to her heels—what do you call “ them?” She paused for a reply, I was half afraid to tell her— “ Don’t you know?” said she; “ Mr. “ Dalby mentioned them the other day.” Still more afraid that she might think ignorance of this kind a great defect in a scholar, which she supposed me to be, and recollecting, at the same time, the poet’s couplet :

Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos’d as things forgot—

I said : “ A moment’s reflection will bring to your “ Ladyship’s mind the *Petanus* and *Talaria* of Mer- “ cury.”—“ O yes,” said she, “ in a moment I should “ have remembered the names of his feet-wings and “ wand : with these and his winged cap—what do “ you call that?” Driven by this question to a *ne plus ultra*, I was under the necessity of taking off her attention from her error by huddling the terms together, saying ; “ I observe your Ladyship means “ that she shall be completely equipped as Mercury, “ with his petasus, or winged cap ; talaria, or heel- “ wings ; and caduceus, or wand.”—“ Exactly so,” replied Lady Broke, who in this little mythological chace had lost the thread of her discourse, “ Flora is “ to be Mercury. All the other parts are disposed of “ among my friends, who insisted that I should take “ that of Venus upon myself. I have engaged some “ of the under-players at Exeter to be the Arcadi- “ ans, and to form, besides, dancing and singing “ groups, in different parts of the grounds, which

“ will be beautifully illuminated. How do you like
“ the mask? You observe what a pleasing turn I
“ give to the old story: for I could not really meta-
“ morphose my heroine into a tree without a melan-
“ choly catastrophe, which would not suit a birth-
“ day; and besides, how much more simple and
“ elegant is it to conceal her among laurels, ey?” I
was now completely afloat in the stream of depend-
ence, where I should soon have sunk, had I disdained
to use the bladders of flattery that were to support
me in it. My lips began to be familiar with the
word *admirable*, my replies satisfied her Ladyship,
and she gave me the mask to copy my part, telling
me that I had a fortnight to make myself master of
it, though she wished I could be ready for a re-
hearsal in a few days. This I promised to be,
and a circular letter was immediately dispatched to
all the amateur performers, inviting them to meet on
Tuesday in the ensuing week, and spend the day at
Broke-hall. Mr. Radley, the butler, was sent for,
and enjoined to see that the works were completed
directly, and the remaining scenes immediately
brought from Exeter. As Radley was leaving the room,
Lady Broke said to him; “ You will see Mr. Mor-
“ land taken care of, and made as comfortable as you
“ can, Radley, in your department.”—“ Certainly,
“ my Lady:” replied the butler, eyeing me from
head to foot as he went out.

Finding myself in her Ladyship’s good graces, I
took the opportunity to speak for poor Thomas, and
had the satisfaction to succeed. She consented to
keep him on my account, and desired that I would
employ him to do every thing I wanted. This suc-
cess emboldened me to speak also for Murphy, which
led to a discovery of my own knowledge in music;
for though Apollo had descended from Mr. Dalby to
me, her Ladyship had taken my vocal capacity for

granted. Her delight on hearing that I understood music, that I sung, played on the piano, and had been practising the lute, was evinced in a manner not entirely suitable to her previous dignity. It was expressed in a language far more condescending and familiar than I could have expected, and she desired me to bring both Murphy and the lute to Broke-hall as soon as I could. I said that if it were not for losing time, I would go to Exeter immediately, but that, if her Ladyship would suffer me to send Thomas, it would answer as well. She told me I might do as I pleased with Thomas, and bade me desire him to take the horse he usually rode on her business.

On leaving the china-room, I went in quest of Flora to find Thomas, and to obtain a little knowledge of the house. Sir Nicholas and Mr. Broke being out riding, and Miss Broke on a short visit; my little conductress took the opportunity of showing me the mansion. It is not necessary to enter into a minute description of it; the modern building was spacious and elegant, and the castle, though neglected, appeared to have been magnificent. The family establishment was very large: about the offices, I saw a great many domestics, and among them Thomas, whom I accosted and desired to come to my room, whither, after thanking Flora, I repaired to write to Murphy. Thomas was overjoyed at the tidings I imparted, and declared that he should be happy to wait upon me as long as he lived. "To be sure, Mr. Morland," said he, "it is a good place to live in; but I must say, Sir, though I hope you will take no farther notice of it, that the family be the most comical, rumbustical, odd folks I ever did see. I must say, howsomever, that my Lady's vagaries are all nothing at all, or funny enough for a man to think upon apart; but I hate a down-look and a discontented soul like Sir Nicholas's: he never

“do laugh or smile, except when he be intoxicated with liquor, but always look as black and sulky as a culprit going to be hanged.” I reprimanded him for speaking irreverently of his employers. “I never do, Mr. Morland,” replied he, “but I don’t know how it is, your goodness to me opened the door of my heart, and so what was in would out.” I gave him credit for this, as I remembered that he was more on the reserve when I first talked with him. Indeed I found him to be strictly observant of his duty, and a faithful servant in spite of the just opinion he had formed of the Broke family, which laid the foundation of my attachment to him. I kept him in my room while I wrote a few lines to Murphy, whom I desired not to fail coming early the next day to Broke-hall, and to bring his violin and the lute I had returned.

Having dispatched Thomas, I joined Flora and her companions, and we soon after went to dinner in the butler’s refectory, where I partook of a repast more suited to provoke appetite than allay hunger, during which Mr. Radley invited me to challenge the ladies to take wine, and at the same time set me the example. In the course of the meal and a very short time after the cloth was removed we finished a bottle, and Radley would have opened another, had I not protested against it on account of the task I had undertaken. Finding that it was not through squeamishness, he permitted me to retire, saying to me significantly as I put my hand upon the lock of the door; “on this side, good-fellowship and sound corks; on the other, *mum*.” The eyes of the females were upon me, their smiles supported the butler’s sentiment, I therefore smiled likewise, and echoed his *mum*, as I left the room. My prudence did not stifle my surprise, and I arrived at my room throwing up my eyes and hands as the force of reflection act-

ed on my muscles. The butler was a pleasant fellow, and perhaps the conversation at his table was equal, if not superiour, to the general cast of that at the first table, and I had but one objection to the enjoyment it afforded; it was seized by stealth, it was a want of fidelity, a breach of trust: a stale crumb soaked in water was therefore preferable. Be this as it may, I found myself involved in the butler's confidence, and at first I was at a loss how to act, but I concluded with a determination to open the Baronet's eyes, if I found him deserving of it. Meanwhile I applied myself to the performance of my engagement with Lady Broke; I copied my part from her manuscript, and studied it, as the phrase is, so assiduously, that I was soon master of it. The songs interspersed through the piece I found adapted to old popular airs, and those not badly selected; for, the vulgar ear, however ignorant of the rules of harmony, is ever just in its choice of melody.

I saw no more of Lady Broke the first day. She ordered the carriage after dinner, and went out with her son to make a visit to a family who were her chief assistants on this grand occasion. In the evening I strolled alone, with my part of *Apollo* in my hand, through the grounds, and, making a circle, approached the theatre by the lawn, at the bottom of it. The sun was but just set, the fine twilight of the season had scarcely begun to cast its brown shade upon the surrounding objects, a dead silence reigned, not a leaf was stirring: the workmen had quitted their labour, their working table and tools remained on the stage; I walked through the wooden intricacies that were to form the simple ascent of a mountain, and advanced to the front of the building, when I saw two persons standing at a little distance apparently in conversation respecting the preparations for the festival. They approached without perceiving me;

I had taken a seat on a stool at the side-door. The two men entered on the opposite side, when one of them proceeded down the stage without looking my way, while the other stood gazing at me with terror as if I had been a phantom, on which I rose and went forwards a few steps. "Keep off, keep off," cried he, in a loud but tremulous voice, "what are you? what do you want?" The affrighted wretch shook every limb. "Speak," added he, "what do you want?"—"I am nothing," replied I, "and want nothing."—"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed he, "have mercy on me!" By this time, the other person returned, and I recognized him to be Mr. Radley; but how great was my surprise on finding that the man whom the sudden sight of me had so terrified was Sir Nicholas Broke himself. "Are you ill, Sir Nicholas?" cried Radley, running up to him. Sir Nicholas kept his eyes fixed upon me, at the same time asking Radley if he saw nothing. "Yes, Sir Nicholas," replied he, "I see Mr. Edward, my Lady's secretary."—"Secretary!" said the Baronet in a lower tone, still looking at me, and gradually recovering himself, "are you sure of that?"—"O yes, Sir Nicholas," answered the butler, "he dined with me to-day."—"I knew he was to come," said Sir Nicholas, but I thought "not till next week." He still eyed me, yet suffered me to make a second bow before he spoke to me. Indeed it was some time before he was sufficiently composed. He then asked me my name, and where I came from. I told him my name was Edward Morland, and that I came from Berkshire. After a short pause, during which his eyes continued rivetted on me, he asked me if I had a part in Lady Broke's mask, to which I replied that her Ladyship had done me the honour to appoint me one. He was now so much recovered as to speak with ease. "I have no

“doubt,” said he, “you will do it justice.” He then put some trivial questions, and went on with Radley. As he did not desire my attendance, I presumed not to follow him: they went through the theatre, and I soon lost sight of them.

At supper, where I again sat down with the same messmates, I learned that these fits of terroure were not uncommon with Sir Nicholas, though the knowledge of them was confined as much as possible to the family. The girls said they were sure he believed in ghosts, and the butler declared he had never seen him so shaken before. “They say he is nervous,” continued he, “but for my part, I think it’s a bad conscience.”

THE END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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